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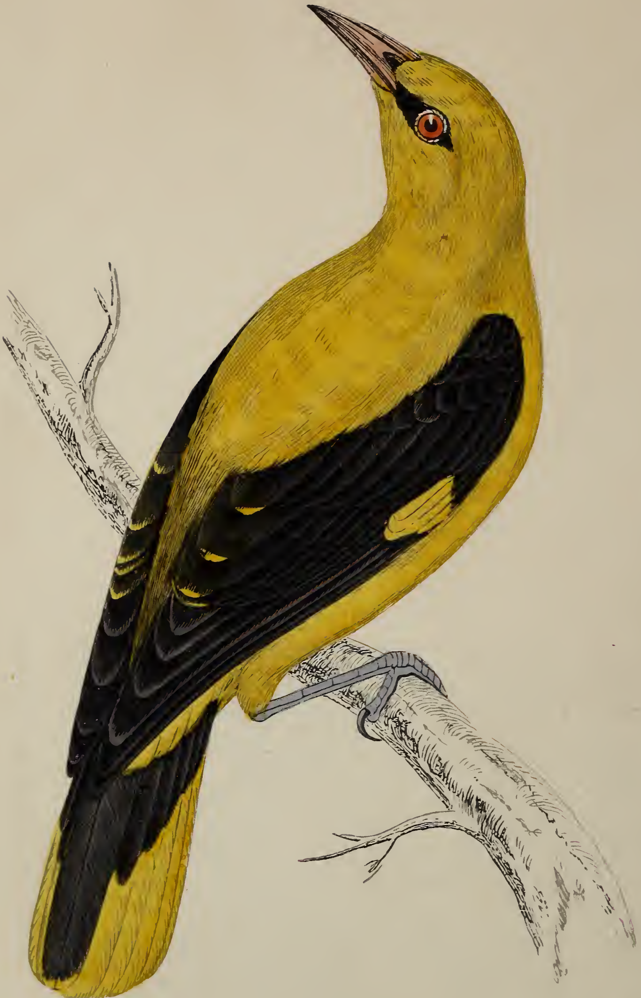

GOLDEN ORIOLE.

HISTORY

BRITISH BIRDS.

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A
HISTORY
OF
BRITISH BIRDS.

BY

rancis rpen

THE REV. F. O. MORRIS, B.A.,

MEMBER OF THE ASHMOLEAN SOCIETY.

VOL. IV.

CONTAINING FORTY-EIGHT COLOURED ENGRAVINGS.

'Gloria in excelsis Deo.'

LONDON:
GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS, 5, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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HISTORY OF BRITISH BIRDS.

GOLDEN ORIOLE.

Oriolus galbula, PENNANT. MONTAGU. BEWICK

Oriolus—..........? *Galbula*—A diminutive of *Galbus*—Yellow.

THIS splendid bird is a native of the continent of Europe, and of portions of those of Africa and Asia. In the first named it is plentiful in Spain, Italy, and France, and is also found in Germany, Bavaria, Holland, and Malta, in the latter on its passage at the seasons of migration. It occurs in Persia, and Asia Minor, and in Egypt, and other parts of the northern shores of Africa.

The Golden Oriole, though not one of our very rarest visitors, is yet sufficiently unfrequent to justify an enumeration of the different specimens recorded as having occurred. In Yorkshire one, a fine female, was killed in the spring of 1834, near the Lighthouse at the Spurn Point, at the mouth of the Humber. In April, 1824, one was shot at Aldershot, in Hampshire Two are related by Dr. Moore to have been met with in Devonshire. In Cornwall several have been obtained; one near the Land's End in 1833. In Lancashire one, near Manchester, in July, 1811, and one at Quernmore Park, near Lancaster. In Surrey one was seen by Mr. Meyer, on Burwood Common, near Walton-on-Thames, and one was shot near Godalming, in 1833. One seen near Cheshunt. In Suffolk two were taken near Saxmundham, and the nest is said to have been found in that county. In Norfolk a pair were shot at Diss, one at Hethersett, near Norwich, in April, 1824, and one, a male, at Heigham, in the environs of Norwich, on the 8th. of May, 1847; the female, it is believed, was seen at the same time: a pair also built in the garden of the Rev. Mr. Lucas, of Ormsby. In the county of Durham one was killed near Tynemouth. In Kent, two built near Elmstone, and were unfortunately shot in June, 1849. Two others had a nest and young near the village of Ord, in the corresponding month, in the year 1836. Several young ones were shot in the neighbourhood in the summer of 1834, and occasional visitors had been seen in that locality for some years previous. Another pair built at Oxney, near Kingsdown, about the year 1841. One was shot near Sandwich, and another, a male, as it would appear near Walmer.

In Ireland, one was seen for some months in a garden between Castle Martyr and Middleton, in the county of Cork, in the summer of 1817.? One was shot near Bantry, at the seat of Lord Bantry, and another seen at Cahirmore, near Roxborough. One was shot in the county of Wexford, in May, 1823; another near Gorey, in 1837.? One near Donaghdee, in the county of Down, on the 11th. of May, 1824; one at Ballymona, in the county of Waterford, in 1824 or 1825, and another, a male, near Woodstown, in June, 1838; one near Arklow, in the county of Wicklow, in the summer of 1827.? One on the coast of Kerry, in the summer of 1838; and one, a male, in a garden at Ballintore, near Ferns, in the summer of 1837.

In Scotland, or the northern islands, none appear to have as yet been seen.

It is a migratory species, moving southwards in April, and northwards again in the month of September.

These birds frequent woods and groves, and in the fruit season repair to orchards. They are described as being very shy in their habits. The female is so careful of her young, that she will sometimes suffer herself to be taken on the nest. They are capable of being kept in confinement, though not, it is said, without difficulty, and have been taught to whistle tunes. They are generally seen singly or in pairs, excepting while the members of the family continue together in the autumn. These are the only salient points that I am aware of, in regard to the habits of this species.

They feed on insects and their larvæ, and on the various fruits that come in their way—figs, cherries, olives, and grapes.

Their song is described as loud and clear, and their call-note as somewhat resembling their own name, given to them similarly in different languages on that account. It is loud, and somewhat resembling that of the Parrot.

The nest is flat in shape, and placed in the angle formed by the branching boughs of a tall tree, to which it is firmly attached. It is made of stalks of grass, small roots, and wool, cleverly interwoven together, and is lined with the finer portions of the materials. The one taken in Kent, alluded to before, is described by J. B. Ellman, Esq., of Rye, in the 'Zoologist,' page 2496, as having been suspended from the extreme end of the topmost bough of an oak, and composed entirely of wool, carefully bound together with dried grass.

The eggs are commonly four or five in number, of a white colour, sometimes with a tinge of purple, and a few spots of black, brownish black, or grey, and claret colour.

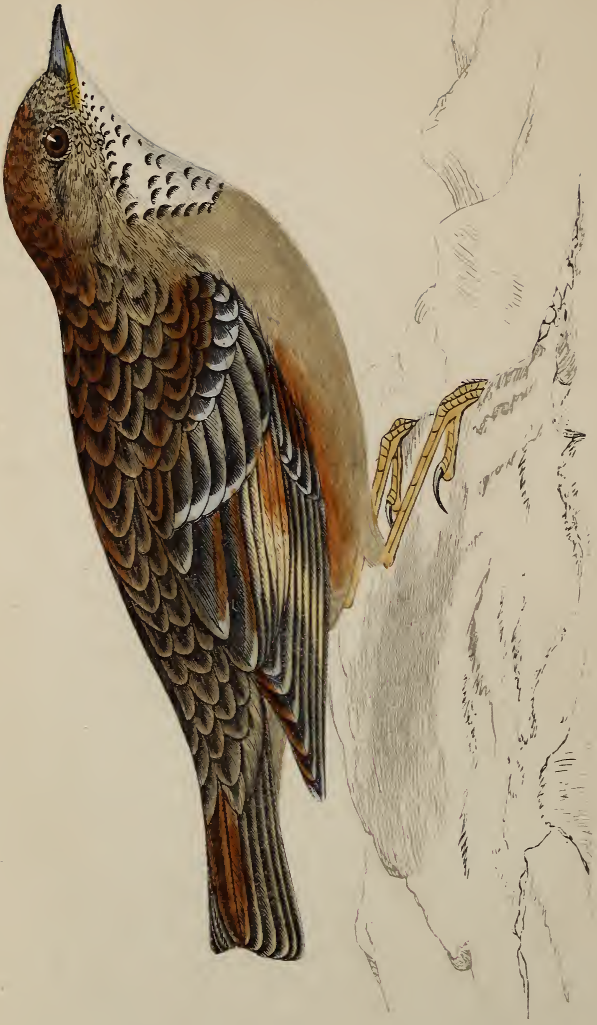
Male; length, nine inches and a half; bill, light brownish red, flattened at the base, and laterally compressed at the tip: the upper bill is nearly straight at the base, and gently arched towards the tip; there is a prominent ridge along it; it is toothed near the extremity. Iris, red—the space between it and the eye is black; head, crown, neck on the back and in front, and on the sides, and the nape bright yellow. Chin, throat, and breast, bright yellow. The wings, when closed, reach to within an inch of the end of the tail; the greater wing coverts have their tips and margins yellow; lesser wing coverts, yellow; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, black, their tips yellow, excepting those of the two outer primaries, and the outer margins of all, excepting the first, are also yellow; underneath, the wing feathers are greyish black; the first quill feather is not half so long as the second, the second not so long as the fourth, but longer than the fifth, the third the longest; greater and lesser under wing coverts, yellow. The tail, which is slightly rounded, is black, excepting the two middle feathers, which are greenish yellow at the base, and yellow on the terminal edge, and the outer feathers, which are yellow from the tips to the middle on the outer webs; underneath, the black feathers are greyish black; upper tail coverts, bright yellow; under tail coverts, also bright yellow. Legs and toes, bluish grey; claws, light brownish red.

It is to be observed that the male bird does not attain the brilliant yellow plumage until the third year: its beautiful colours 'grow with its growth.'

In the female the bill is also light brownish red: the black streak between it and the eye is wanting. Forehead, yellow, with a tinge of green; head, crown, and neck on the back, yellowish green—in front the latter is pale yellowish grey, and on the sides greenish yellow; nape, also yellowish green; chin and throat, dull greyish white, marked with longitudinal pale brown lines. Breast, dull greyish white, with larger longitudinal pale brown lines, and bright yellow on the sides, which are also streaked in the same way; back, greenish yellow. Greater and lesser wing coverts, brownish black, tipped with pale yellow, and dull yellowish at the base; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brownish black, their edges greenish yellow, and their tips, excepting those of the two outer ones, pale yellowish white. Tail, brownish black, yellowish at the base, and with less yellow at the end and sides than in the male; underneath, it is yellowish grey; upper tail coverts, greenish yellow; under tail coverts, bright yellow. Legs and toes, bluish grey; claws, light brownish red.

Young; bill, more brown than in the male; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, dusky yellowish grey; chin, throat, and breast, yellowish white, the latter with a central line of brown on each feather, and the last-named yellow on the sides; back, dusky yellowish grey. Primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brown; tail, brownish olive colour; upper tail coverts, tipped with yellow; under tail coverts, yellow.

The female is duller in colour than the male.



ALPINE ACCENTOR.

ALPINE ACCENTOR.

ALPINE WARBLER. COLLARED STARE.

Accentor alpinus,	Fleming Selby.
Motacilla alpina,	Gmelin.
Sturnus collaris,	Gmelin. Latham.
" *moritanicus,*	Gmelin Latham.

Accentor—A chanter—*canto,* to sing—(a factitious word.)
Alpinus—Alpine.

For want of a vernacular name for this species, I am compelled for the present, much against my will, to adopt, as in some similar cases, one that I by no means approve of, but I have done so only as a temporary thing, and in hope of 'a good time coming,' when the Queen's English shall 'enjoy its own again'—a consummation much to be wished by every lover of his country's tongue.

This bird is not uncommon in Germany, France, Spain, Switzerland, and Italy; and Temminck includes it among the Asiatic species, as a native of Japan. It frequents the highest parts of any alpine districts, as its name suggests; this at least in summer, but in winter it seeks and finds a milder temperature in the warm and sheltered valleys, and thus, like the lowly and humble in life, escapes the severest of the storms and tempests which the lofty and the aspiring are necessarily exposed to, in the higher atmosphere in which their lot is cast or their place chosen: in severe weather it approaches farm-yards, villages, and houses.

One of these birds, a female, was observed in the garden of King's College, Cambridge, on the 23rd. of November, 1822, and obtained by the Provost, the Rev. Dr. Thackeray; another, no doubt the male, was seen by him at the same time, both together frequenting the grass-plots of the College garden, and climbing about the buttresses of the venerable building. A second was shot in a garden on the borders of

Epping Forest, in the county of Essex; and a third at Wells, in Somersetshire, in 1833, in the garden of the Very Rev. Dr. Goodenough, Dean of Wells; a fourth was seen by the Rev. R. Lubbock, at Oulton, in Suffolk, in the year 1824, about the month of March; and a fifth is said to have been obtained in Devonshire.

This species is peculiarly tame and confident in its habits, moving away but a short distance if nearly approached. It is mostly to be seen on rocks or on the ground, and seldom perches on trees; it frequently shuffles its wings and tail after the manner of the Dunnock.

Its food consists of flies and other insects, grasshoppers, earwigs, ants' eggs, and small seeds.

Its note is described as resembling the syllables 'tree, tree:' its song is said to be pleasing.

The nest is placed among stones or in some cavity or crevice of the mountain rock, as also at times, it is said, on the roofs of houses in such situations, as also under the shelter of the alpine rose or other low bush. It is made of moss and fine grass, and is lined with wool and hair.

The eggs, four or five in number, are of a beautiful light greenish blue colour. There are said to be two broods in the year.

Male; length, six inches and a half to seven inches; bill, strong, straight, and fine-pointed; the upper bill is dusky black, yellowish white at the base; the lower bill is orange yellowish white, except at the tip, which is brownish black; iris, dark brown. Head, crown, and neck on the sides and back, dull light brownish grey; the latter in front is dull yellowish white, with a small black spot on each feather; nape, brownish grey; chin and throat, dull white, with a small black spot on each feather of a crescent shape, which loses or gains its perfect form according to the season of the year; it is bordered below with a black band; breast above, dark grey, varied lower down and on the sides with orange chesnut brown marks, the edges of the feathers white, and then greyish or yellowish white, tinged with yellowish brown, and spotted with darker brown; back, brown, the feathers being greyish brown on the edges, with longitudinal patches on the centre of each of dark blackish brown, more or less visible in different seasons of the year; on the lower part it is greyish brown, in some specimens reddish grey, with dark shaft streaks.

The wings have the first feather very short, the second longer than the fourth, the third the longest, but all these three nearly equal; greater wing coverts, reddish brown, varied with dusky black, edged with yellowish ash-colour, and tipped with a white triangular-shaped spot; lesser wing coverts, yellowish grey, those next the greater wing coverts dusky towards the end with pure white tips: two white bands are thus formed across the wings, but they are more or less faded off in different seasons of the year. Primaries, blackish brown, edged with yellowish rust-colour; secondaries, blackish brown, the inner ones narrowly margined with reddish brown; tertiaries, darker blackish brown on the centre of each feather, the sides deeply edged with reddish brown, and tipped with dull faded white. The tail, which is slightly forked, is dark brown ash-colour, tipped with dull buff white, the outside feathers terminating in a large reddish white spot upon their inner webs, and the inner feathers less extensively so; the base is lighter than the rest, and all the feathers are wider there than at the tip, they are also edged with yellowish grey; the rufous tips fade and wear into dull white at the season of the year; underneath, it is grey, also tipped with dull yellowish white; the upper tail coverts are very long, reaching to within an inch of the end of the tail; under tail coverts, dark greyish brown, broadly edged with dull yellowish white. The legs, which are scaled in front, and the toes, are strong, and pale reddish orange brown, the toes brownish; claws, dusky black; the hind claw is very strong, much curved, and very sharp at the tip, where it is compressed.

The female resembles the male, but her colours are more dull, less rufous, more spotted on the under parts, and more grey on the sides; the spots on the breast are smaller and paler, and the under bill less yellow.

The young have the bill horn-colour, dingy yellow at the base, the back much tinged with brown, the white edges of the rust-coloured feathers on the sides much more extensive, nearly prevailing over the other colour. Before the first moult the whole of the upper parts are ash-colour, without spots: the feet and claws are paler than in the adult.

DUNNOCK.

SHUFFLE-WING. HEDGE-SPARROW. HEDGE-WARBLER.
WINTER FAUVETTE.

Accentor modularis,	Jenyns.
Motacilla modularis,	Linnæus.
Sylvia modularis,	Latham.
Curruca sepiaria,	Brisson.

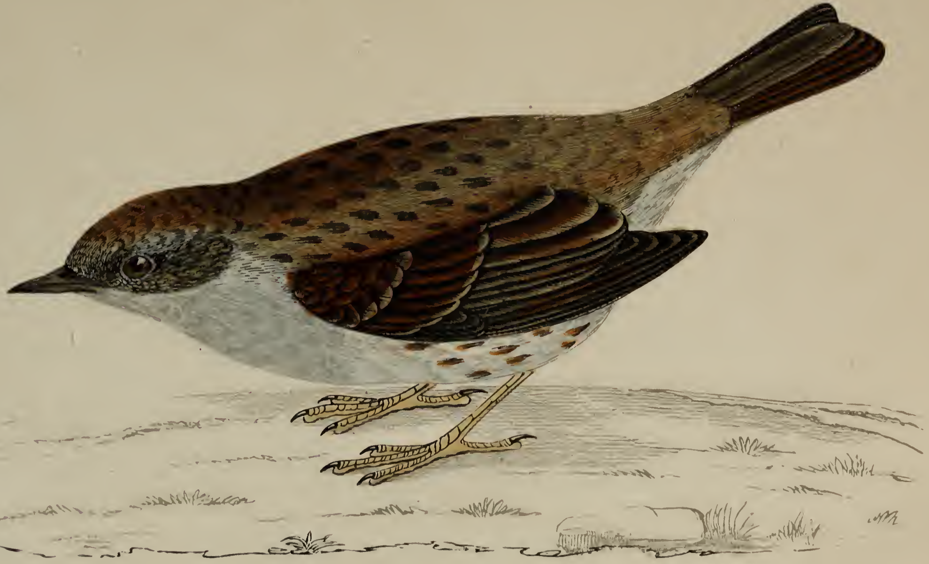
Accentor—A chanter, (a factitious word.)
Modularis. Modulor—To sing—to warble—to trill.

Unobtrusive, quiet, and retiring, without being shy, humble and homely in its deportment and habits, sober and unpretending in its dress, while still neat and graceful, the Dunnock exhibits a pattern which many of a higher grade might imitate, with advantage to themselves and benefit to others through an improved example.

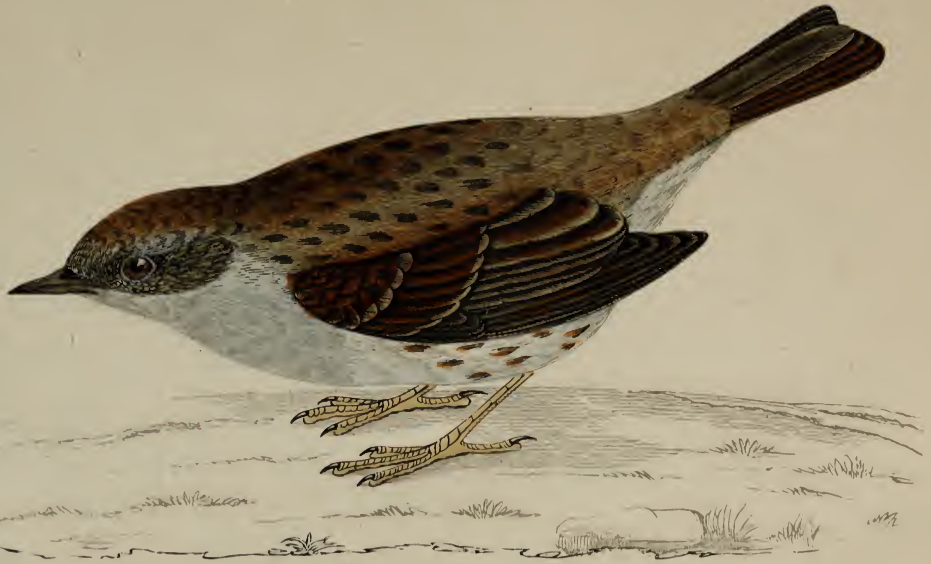
It inhabits all the more temperate parts of Europe, going as far north as Norway and Sweden, which it leaves, according to M. Nillson, at the approach of winter. In Italy it is plentiful in the latter season; so it is also in France; arriving there in October, and leaving in the spring. In Asia, my friend Mr. Hugh Edwin Strickland has noticed it, in Asia Minor, in December.

It is common likewise in Scotland and Ireland. It occasionally visits Orkney in October. It was observed near Kirkwall during the winter of 1842, and again in the same season in 1844.

Hardy in its habits, it needs not to migrate, but remains in its local habitation throughout the year. In the depth of winter, indeed, it approaches more nearly to houses, which again it leaves with the change of season for the hedge-side, the garden, the orchard, the plantation, or the pleasure-ground; and there, or among bushes, it passes its summer, seldom



DUNNOCK.



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advancing into open ground, or frequenting trees of larger size.

Even in the depth of the severest winter, when, as in this February, 1853, the ground is everywhere covered with snow a foot deep, and you would think that every motion must be chilled in the breast of even the hardiest bird that is exposed to the damaging attacks of the two 'weird sisters,' cold and hunger, by night and by day; you will see the Dunnock flirting about some low bush in the splendid sunshine that succeeds the bitter blasts which have come and gone, and warbling its unpretending little lay, as if to shew that an even and quiet temper is that which will best sustain under the most adverse circumstances of life. Now it has come down upon the snow, and its tiny feet move nimbly over the crystal surface, its tail quickly moved up and down the while; now it stops for a few moments, now hops on again, and now is gone, in company with its mate, pursuing or pursued. Or, half-hopping, half-walking, its usual gait, it approaches the door, in search of any chance crumbs, which, if you are charitably disposed, you will have placed there for any feathered pensioners, whom the inclemency of the season may compel to a more intimate acquaintance than they otherwise would have chosen. 'Never turn thy face from any poor man,' says the Holy Word, 'and then the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee,' and so in like manner let your benevolence embrace even those whose actions alone can speak their wants.—'O give relief, and Heaven will bless your store.'

These birds never under any circumstances, or at all events very rarely indeed, enter into houses by the open door or window, as some others do through stress of weather, though so devoid of shyness in their approaches to them. The neighbourhood of the hedge is their favourite haunt, from whence they venture but a little way into the field, or the road. Sometimes however they are seen in towns, in such places as squares, where trees and shrubs are planted.

They are by no means gregarious, though three or four may sometimes be observed at no great distance from each other. They are seldom seen among or on the upper branches even of a bush or hedge, and as Mr. Macgillivray remarks, it is very rare to see two flying in the same direction, although they are generally observed in pairs. In dry sunny weather in summer, they may be seen sometimes basking in the sun. They are inoffensive towards other birds, and friendly also with one another. In one instance, however, a relative of Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, witnessed a fight between two of them, in which one was killed: the victor, after having slain his antagonist, twice or thrice uttered a song of triumph, at the 'finale' of which he each time flew at and again struck his victim. They display great concern if their nest be disturbed, and endeavour to entice any intruder away: they roost at night in some accustomed place. They are easily tamed, and kept in confinement, and in that state shew much attachment to other birds. They are fond both of dusting and washing themselves. It would seem that they roost on the ground. In hard winters they not very unfrequently perish from want.

Their flight is straight, and generally very short, as also low.

The food of this species consists of small seeds, particularly those of the grasses, grain, and insects, minute snails, chrysalides, and larvæ, in addition to which small fragments of stone are swallowed; and in search of such, or any other minute eatables, too small even for you to observe at all what they are, you will see it quietly, peaceably, and industriously searching about, advancing with that gentle raising and shuffling of the wings, most exhibited in the breeding season, from whence one of its vernacular names. It also frequently moves the tail up and down, with a somewhat similar motion; and in the spring floats in the air in a manner foreign to its usual habit. Even though you may approach within a few yards of it, it moves or flits but a little way off, or hops into the nearest covert until you have passed by. The young are fed with insects.

The song of this gentle, modest, and retiring little bird, which is heard even in winter, and continued until the end of May, and in fact for nearly the whole of the year, is, as might be expected, of a quiet and subdued tone. It is, however, particularly mellow and pleasing, making up in soft richness what it wants in compass and power: I have heard it on the 19th. of February, which is about the period that it is usually commenced. It frequently utters it in fair weather, from the middle or top of a bush, hedge, or low tree, though sometimes from the ground, or on a wall, repeating it eight or nine times in succession; but should the temperature change, and a storm of the 'bitter piercing air' of the north succeed a comparatively milder time, it chills the heart of the little warbler, and his strains are in consequence curtailed. Yet, on the other hand, Mr. Weir has heard the Dunnock singing regularly at night about eleven o'clock, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, even in the darkest evenings of autumn and winter, and when the weather was cold and frosty. Its ordinary note is a small cheep. The shuffling of the wings just spoken of, frequently accompanies its musical performances. It has been observed in confinement to imitate the notes of other kinds of birds kept with it, making a strange medley of all together.

The nest is generally placed in hedges, low furze or other bushes, or shrubs, a few feet from the ground, but also in lack of these, in holes of walls, stacks of wood, in the ivy against a wall, and other similar places. The Rev. Charles Forge, of Driffield, records in the 'Zoologist,' pages 658-9, that he found one among the small branches of an elm tree, standing apart from any hedge. It was placed close to the bole or trunk of the tree, at about ten feet from the ground. Exteriorly, it was composed of wheat straw, intermingled with small recently-dead twigs of the elm, to which the dried leaves were still attached. It had no other lining than the green moss commonly used by the Hedge-Chanter in the construction of its nest, and contained a single egg. One has been known built on a disused garden roller. An outhouse is sometimes made use of for the purpose.

It is deep and well rounded, and from four and a half to five inches in diameter on the outside, and nearly two inches deep. It is made of small twigs and grass, lined with moss, and then with hair, grass, wool, or down, or any appropriate substances at hand.

The eggs, which are sometimes seen so early as the beginning of April, are four or five, rarely six, though sometimes, it is said, seven in number, and of a very elegant greenish blue colour, with a rather glossy surface. Archibald Hepburn, Esq., records in the 'Zoologist,' page 431, his having seen an egg of this species, which was thrown out of the nest by the parents, and was of a bluish white colour, mottled and speckled with light brown; it was much rounder than the usual shape, and was empty inside.

Incubation lasts eleven days, and two broods are often reared in the year; preparations for one being made about the middle of March, and for the latter at the beginning of May: three are sometimes hatched. Meyer, in his 'British Birds,' mentions having seen a nest on the 21st. of January, and found one with a newly-laid egg in it on the 22nd. of July. The same situation is frequently resorted to from year to year.

Male; weight, near six drachms; length, from five inches and three quarters to six and a quarter; bill, dark brown, lighter at the base; the corners of the mouth dull yellow; iris, dark blackish brown with a tint of red. Head and crown, dark bluish grey streaked with brown; neck on the sides, dark bluish grey streaked with brown; nape, grey, streaked longitudinally with brown; chin, throat, and breast, rather dark bluish grey, the latter lighter lower down, and on the sides pale yellowish brown, the centres of the feathers darker; back above, brown, the centres of the feathers reddish, and the outsides yellowish brown, thus forming dark streaks of an oval shape.

The wings, which when closed reach to about a third of the length of the tail, and expand to the width of eight inches and three quarters, have the first feather very small, the second a little longer than the seventh, but shorter than the sixth, than which the third is a little shorter, the fourth and fifth nearly equal in length, but the fourth rather the longest, and the former very little longer than the sixth. Greater and lesser wing coverts, yellowish brown, the middle ones tipped with whitish, forming a mark across the wings; primaries, dark dusky brown; secondaries, dark dusky brown; tertiaries, also dark dusky brown, margined with reddish brown; larger and lesser under wing coverts, brown, bordered with whitish. The tail, which is slightly forked, and rather curved downwards, and has the side feathers a little bent outwards, is dusky brown, the feathers narrowly edged with reddish brown; upper tail coverts, brown; under tail coverts, pale yellowish brown or slate-colour, the centres of the feathers dark along the shafts; legs and toes, dark yellowish orange brown; claws, black, the hind claw as large again as either of the others.

The female is scarcely to be distinguished from the male, but is smaller, measuring in length from five inches and a half to nearly six inches; the wings expand to the width of eight inches and a half; her plumage is more dull, the spots larger, and the lower part of the back more olive-coloured.

The young before the first moult have the bill light brownish above, below yellowish, the corners of the mouth red; over the eye is a pale yellowish grey streak; the eye is at first dusky, and afterwards dark red; the crown of the head is deep yellowish grey; the throat and breast are dusky greyish or yellowish white, marked with small oval spots of a darker shade; on the sides, which are rusty yellowish, each feather greyish yellow towards the shafts. The upper parts confusedly mottled with dusky and light brownish red, the tips of the feathers being of the latter colour; the greater and lesser wing coverts tipped with rusty yellow; the secondary coverts tipped with dull white. The tail brown, the feathers with light reddish margins: the under tail coverts rusty yellowish with black shaft streaks; the feet light brownish red. The moult takes place in July or August.

The colours fade with the advance of summer, the reddish brown edges of the feathers become narrower, and the grey of the breast paler.

White varieties are sometimes met with. The Rev. Dr. Thackeray, of King's College, Cambridge, obtained one which had the head, neck, body, and wing coverts, dull white, varied with a few markings of the natural colour; the wings and tail pure white, the bill and legs pale reddish. The Rev. Robert Holdsworth, of Brixham, had another which was of a nearly uniform reddish buff colour. The late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, mentions one obtained near Clonmel, in February, 1838. the plumage of which was entirely of a cream-colour of one shade, and the under plumage of a paler hue. One was seen at Weston-super-Mare, Somersetshire, in 1851, which had the wings and tail white, and the back and breast mottled with brown. A nest of piebald ones was reared in the same neighbourhood a few years previous. One near Lewes, Sussex, in 1849, which was entirely white, with the exception of a red patch or two on the wing.

REDBREAST.

ROBIN. ROBIN REDBREAST. RUDDOCK. ROBINET.

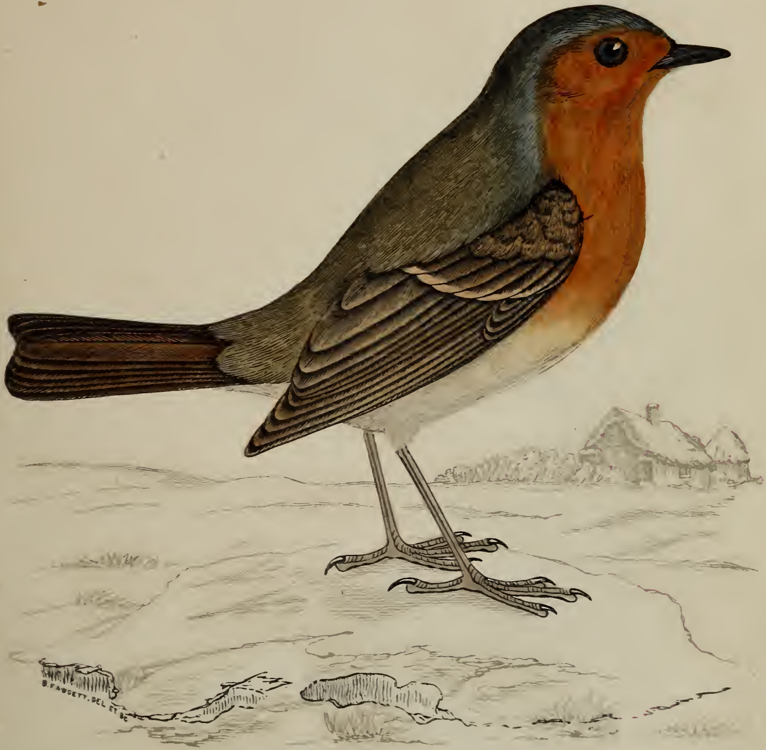
Sylvia rubecula,	PENNANT. FLEMING.
Motacilla rubecula,	MONTAGU. BEWICK.
Erythaca rubecula,	SELBY. GOULD.

Sylvia. *Sylva*—A wood. *Rubecula.* *Ruber*—Red—ruddy.

THE thoughts of our earliest years are those, each one of which, 'ære perennius,' abides with us through life, while those of later years pass away, oftentimes like a shadow without recall. Who then is there in whose oldest memory the legendary tale of the 'Babes in the Wood' does not for ever dwell; and who is there in remembrance of it that with the Robin's so-called faults will not 'love him still?' Faults he certainly has, or at least dispositions which would be such in us, but he fulfils to the letter the mission of his nature, and that is what 'no man living' can say of himself.

An inhabitant of the wildest wood and the gayest garden, the most frequented road, and the most retired lane, the hedge of the pasture field, and the neighbourhood of every country-house, the Robin is an acquaintance of both old and young, and to each and every one he seems like an old friend.

As you walk along the hedgerow side at almost any season of the year, it may be, 'nescio quid meditans nugarum,' your wandering thought is for the moment arrested by the sight of a Redbreast perched on one of the topmost sprays, or by the sound of the pretty note that its owner warbles before you: you cannot help but stop a moment, and speak a word to the well-known bird, as if to an old acquaintance; and you almost fancy from his winsome attitude, the attention he seems to pay, and the quietness with which he remains, that he understands, if not your language, yet the purport of it, and is aware that you are a friend who will not hurt or harm him.


B. FAWCETT. DEL ET SC

REDBREAST.

It is a constant resident throughout the year in all the more temperate and warmer parts of Europe—Saxony, Spain, Italy, and Holland; visiting Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, in the summer. In the northern parts of Africa, it is also known. In Asia, H. E. Strickland, Esq. has seen it in Asia Minor; and Keith Abbot, Esq. in Persia.

With us it is universally distributed in the three kingdoms; and even in the depth of the most lonely wood you are sometimes almost startled by the suddenness with which an unexpected Robin will make his appearance on some neighbouring branch. In Shetland it occasionally occurs, and in Orkney, though not very numerous, it is seen throughout the year; and also even in the bare islands of the outer Hebrides.

The Redbreast remains with us throughout the year, unless indeed it be a contradiction of this statement, that some are supposed to migrate hither from more northern parts in the winter: they are believed to perform their migrations singly. In summer they for the most part, but by no means universally, remove from that more close propinquity to human habitations which in winter they had sought, to a greater distance, where retirement is to be better gained. Numbers have been known to alight on a vessel in the Mediterranean, and apparently much fatigued with their journey to and from its opposite shores. The same Robin generally frequents the same haunt, and it is probably his jealousy of any interference with his prerogative, that makes him so ready to attack any trespasser, though of his own kith and kindred, that ventures within the bounds of his domain—he desires to be like Robinson Crusoe, 'Monarch of all he surveys.'

In severe weather many fall victims to the exterminating effects of hunger and cold. The female bird is very attentive to the charge of her nest, and has often been known to allow herself to be taken in the hand without deserting it. One has been taken on the nest and placed with it in a cage, where she continued to sit; and another, though taken off the nest six times in a single day, and even detained in a cage for a few minutes, returned to her charge when set at liberty, and successfully hatched her eggs.

As one proof, 'unum e multis,' of the pugnacious disposition of the Robin, for which he is indeed noted, Mr. George B. Clarke has sent me the following anecdote, since recorded in 'The Naturalist,' volume i, page 45:—'I thought I would try it with one of its own species stuffed, of which I have a very fine one. I first of all placed it inside the window, so that the Robin in the garden could see it, and he immediately flew to the window and commenced pecking at the glass; but not succeeding in getting at the stuffed one, he flew away for about a minute, and then returned and commenced again at the glass, through which he could see the bird. I then placed the stuffed Robin outside, on the window-sill, and went and hid myself, so that I could see what the Robin would do now that he could get at it; he very soon returned, and commenced pecking at the stuffed bird most furiously. At last he knocked it off the sill of the window; he followed it as it fell down, and seemed to be quite pleased at being victorious, and continued pecking at and pulling feathers out of it, while it was lying on the ground. I then came out of my hiding-place, and frightened him away, or else he would soon have spoiled my bird.'

An exactly similar circumstance has also been related to me by Dr. Henry Moses, of Appleby, since the above was registered. He had placed a recently-stuffed Robin in the garden to dry; some Sparrows and a Dunnock soon began to eye him curiously, and with evident signs of hostility; they did not, however, seem to like his look—a piece of wire which had been left projecting from his head giving him a rather fearful appearance—and sheered off. No sooner, however, had they been gone than a Robin made a most furious attack upon his supposed rival, dashed at him with the greatest violence, buffeted him with his wings, knocked out one of his eyes, and so miserably mauled and distorted him, that he was rendered totally useless as a specimen of the art of taxidermy. It must be acknowledged that the Robin is of a very masterful temper and disposition. You are looking out of your window, watching perhaps a Dunnock, a Tomtit, or even a Sparrow in the tree in front of it: on a sudden the bird is flown, vanished as if by the wave of the wand of a magician; but the next moment the cause appears, and, in the place of the quiet Shuffle-wing or lively Titmouse, the necromancer, a pert Redbreast, stands, whose only object in appearing there seems to have been to dislodge those, who would have remained with a Sparrow or a Thrush, undisturbing and undisturbed. He is even unsociable with those of his own kind; in winter so many as two are scarcely seen together, and as for other species he rarely mingles at all with them. If the nest of the Robin be approached he utters a feeble cheep, and will occasionally attack even a cat, or overcome a bird of his own size.

Mr. R. F. Logan, of Hawthornbrae, Edinburgh, relates the following in the 'Zoologist,' page 1211:—'While busy setting some recent entomological captures, my attention was arrested by something dashing against the window of a small room adjoining that in which I sat. Enquiring into the cause of the racket, I observed a male Redbreast fly from the window, uttering his notes of anger and defiance. He returned in a few minutes, and dashed furiously against the window glass, striking it with his bill and feet simultaneously; this he repeated several times and then retreated to the top of an adjoining wall, where he sung loud notes of triumph, after which, however, he resumed his imaginary contest, and kept it up at intervals, by which time he had apparently come to the conclusion, either that he had vanquished his foe, or that his efforts were of no avail, as I have seen nothing of him since.'

Two have been known to unite together in attacking a flock of Sparrows, and instantly to put them to flight. One which had become somewhat tame from being fed, on another being brought in a cage, attacked the cage with the utmost possible fury, beating it with his wings, and pecking at it with all his might and main. Two have been found so intent on single combat as to be both taken with the hand, and on one of them being set at liberty he set up a song of defiance at the other confined in a cage; and when the latter was released too, the original battle was again renewed. Others have been seen to fight till one was killed. Even within a house two will fight, if one trenches on the domain of the other. 'Unum arbustum non alit duos erithacos.' Thus also Bishop Stanley, 'My own belief being that several species of birds are in the habit not only of, generally speaking, confining themselves to certain localities, but at certain hours of the day frequenting particular spots; an instance in proof may be given of a Robin which, during a considerable portion of the winter took shelter in Norwich Cathedral, perching during the morning service, and almost always within a minute or two of the same time, on a particular part of the Cathedral, when, after warbling a few notes for a short time, it flew to another particular spot, and from thence to a third, generally terminating its course by alighting on the pavement.' This appreciation of time has been observed by others. 'Robins,' says Mr. Thompson, 'and other small birds seem to have a good idea of time, as evinced by their coming to particular spots at the period of the day when food is given to them, and in some cases at none other.'

But if apparently unfriendly with other birds, and quarrelsome with those of his own kind, with us he is familiar and on the best of terms, and though the instances of this on record must be few indeed compared with those that have not been thus noticed, yet they are most amply abundant to give him a character which no other bird possesses.

It may often be noticed how nearly one will approach to some poor man at work upon the high-roads, the crumbs from whose frugal meal he has doubtless been made, or has made himself a partaker of. Others, accustomed to be fed at a window-sill, have often been known to tap at the window if shut, as if to remind their friends of their wants. In one instance, recorded in the 'Zoologist,' page 1211, Mr. Robert M. Lingwood mentions one which thus tapped at a window without any previous acquaintance with the owners of the house to which it belonged:—'The following is an instance of remarkable tameness in a Robin:—I was sitting in a room with a blazing wood fire, when my attention was attracted by two or three taps at the window opposite the fire-place, which I found were caused by a Robin. I opened the window, and in a few minutes, the bird flew direct into the room, and after surveying the different parts of it, commenced feeding on the flies in the window; I put some crumbs on the floor, and he almost directly began to feed on them, and then commenced singing; he stayed in the room about twenty minutes, and then took his departure, having shewn no signs of fear, and affording myself and others much pleasure.'

The following occurs in 'The Naturalist,' old series, volume iii, page 44:—'Early in winter, a Robin was seen to frequent a mulberry tree close to the window of the late Mr. Haydon's printing office, (the father of the late well-known artist,) where it sang very sweetly. The workmen opened the window, and at length the bird flew in, and being fed, did not seem at all uneasy of its new situation. It sang almost daily, generally in the morning and evening, wholly disregarding the operations of the workmen, and apparently well satisfied with its new companions, until the following spring. The window being opened at that season, it flew away, but, singular to say, returned to the tree at the approach of winter, and was again received into the office, where it took up its old station till March. Some of the workmen would not believe that it was the same bird, and one of them, having caught it, marked the breast feathers, under the throat, with printing-ink. The next spring came, and the bird took its departure, as before, returning again at the end of September, to the old mulberry tree, with several other birds of its kind. The window was quickly opened to the welcome old songster, when it flew into the office, followed by two other birds, probably its young. It displayed greater familiarity than before, even perching on the caps of the men, and there singing."

In "The Naturalist" for March, 1853, there is a very interesting account given, as forwarded to me by Mrs. Harriet Murchison, of Bicester, of one of these birds, whose tameness in a room equalled that of any of those I have here narrated; and Mr. Thompson also records another history, forwarded to him by a lady from Hazelbank, in the county of Antrim. Two birds became quite tame, one of them feeding out of the hand quite fearlessly:—'In a short time he became more familiar, and seemed to watch our approaches, for he frequently met us on the little walk leading from the house, and when we did not attend to him, he would come dashing past, striking my bonnet violently with his wing, or fluttering in my face; he would sometimes sit upon a twig, as if to hold a conversation with me, for he would be quite silent while I talked with him, and so soon as I paused, he began a little soft and sweet muttering in his throat, as if in reply, which he would cease the moment I again spoke. When we found him absent, and called, Terry! Terry! he was soon at our side; and his hearing must be very acute, for I have seen him flying towards us from a very great distance. To give an idea of his extreme composure and satisfaction while sitting on the hand, he has more than once, after feeding, tucked up one of his little feet under his feathers, as we often see barn-door fowls do, and roosting on a finger, deliberately prepare himself for sleep; which on one occasion he indulged in so long as to completely weary his perch. He would eat off my lap, hop about me without any concern, pick at my shawl, and then look up into my face and begin his little song or prattle.' The occupation of land and notions about tenant-right would seem to have been the cause of various disputes; and on such occasions, the writer says, 'It would have been amusing, had it not been distressing, to view these beauteous little creatures, who seemed only formed for harmony and love, bristling up with rage, every feather like 'quills upon the fretful porcupine,' eyes on fire, and their tiny heads making circles of defiance before the first collision, which always terminated by our separating the combatants, who retreated severally to their respective districts; so fierce have they been that they have even fought upon our hands.' The broods of the two birds in due season appeared, but were of different dispositions, like their parents, or, rather, differently educated in consequence of the difference in them. The one set came not near at all; the others were brought close to the ladies, but the moment the old bird perceived them approach too near, he would dash among them with a great flutter, and scatter them to a proper distance; he was so much on the alert, that they never succeeded in attracting them, and they disappeared entirely during the summer. Mr. Thompson narrates a similar action on the part of the parent of a young Robin which followed a relative of his through the garden, ate food from his hand, and also gave him its 'most sweet company' by perching on his knee or shoulder when he was seated in a garden-chair; this degree of familiarity, however, was not at all approved of by an old bird, most probably the parent, which several times rushed quickly past and drove it away.

The lady concludes, 'The only source of annoyance our birds had with us, were from the dog and the cat, who occasionally accompanied us in our walks,—of the latter they were very much afraid, although she was quite amenable to orders, and did not attempt to molest them,—but, strange to say, with the dog they were much better friends, although, in defiance of all correction, he would frequently make a bounce at them, but only in play; Terry seemed to know this, often remaining quietly on my hand, while Rory stood at my side gazing at him, and we were much amused to watch occasionally a kind of race between them as they accompanied us down the avenue to the front gate, a distance of about two hundred and fifty yards, the dog running before us, and the bird flying from tree to tree during the whole way and back again.'

The Rev. E. I. Moor, in a letter to Mr. Meyer, says, 'A young naval friend of mine, Mr. R. Burroughes, told me that as his ship was once in the Bay of Biscay, at a considerable distance from any land, a common Robin Redbreast was picked up one morning on deck, weak and wounded; it had been driven against a mast of the ship in the night, which was rough and squally. The bird was attended to, and recovered, and continued with the vessel until she reached Bengal, where it was taken to land and liberated It used to fly about the rigging, and come down on the deck to be fed. Mr. Burroughes added, that it was highly curious to see the Robin preparing to shelter itself about the different parts of the rigging, etc., upon the approach of any coarse weather.'

At a gentleman's house in Darley Dale, in Derbyshire, as mentioned in the 'Derby Reporter,' a Robin domiciled for three successive winters, having had ingress and egress during the day, with the privilege of free access to a well-stocked larder, partaking at will of what it contained. Its roosting-place was usually on a Christmas bough in the kitchen, which was retained for its dormitory. It used to enter for the night at dusk of evening, having during the day occasionally sung for hours together to the domestics, as if to reward them for cherishing it thus bountifully. Each year it built its nest in the trunk of a tree near the house, and fed its young from the larder. Being so familiar with the household, it would fly undauntedly from room to room, and occasionally alight on the family breakfast-table, sometimes perching and chirping, as if to ingratiate itself with its hospitable entertainers.

Mr. Macgillivray says, 'In the summer of 1835, a male Robin in my garden became so tame that he picked from the hand of the gardener; and in the middle of the day, when the latter took his dinner, he constantly attended for the purpose of obtaining a portion of it. Upon the knee of my wife I have frequently seen him alight, and take bread out of her hand as familiarly as if he had been tamed from the nest. To me he likewise became very much attached: he continued so during the autumn. One cold morning in the beginning of winter, as I was standing at the door of my house, having heard my voice, he immediately flew to me, and, seeming to claim my protection, followed me into the parlour, where he was quite at ease. I caught him and put him into my garret in which, during the winter, he sang most delightfully. Being sorry to see him alone, I got for him a helpmate to cheer him in his confinement. About the middle of April I set them at liberty, and, to my surprise, a few days after I discovered a very neat nest which they had built. About eight days after this, while I was sitting in the parlour, my old friend flew in, and immediately recognised me; after keeping him for two weeks, I put him out, when he flew to the garden, where he remained during the summer, and with his partner reared a brood of six fine Robins.'

The Robin, when accustomed to be undisturbed frequently approaches very near to those who are working in gardens, to pick up any insects which they may happen to disturb; and will sometimes even alight on the edge of the basket of a fruit-gatherer. One has been known to enter a room where a person was writing, and perch upon the inkstand, returning again after flying out, to sing some time; another entered a room, and rested on the knee of a person sitting there. A curious instance of somewhat analogous to reasoning power in a bird of this species, is related in the 'Magazine of Natural History,' volume viii, pages 545-6:—'It was observed standing upon a bough which overhung a stream, and intently watching some object which was floating down the water. When it came opposite to him he darted down upon it, took it in his claws, and was flying away with it, but being too heavy for him, it fell again into the water. Not to be thwarted, however, he again took his station upon another bough lower down the stream; there he awaited the arrival of the object, again repeated his former operation, and finally bore away the prize.'

Occasionally one will alight on the shoulder of a person sitting out of doors, or on the back of the rustic seat, and sometimes venture to take food from the hand. In the winter Robins will far from unfrequently enter a room, and continue to frequent it for a month, and one has been known to enter a cottage daily, even in summer, to seek the accustomed crumbs which he had been in the habit of finding there. Numerous indeed are the notices of the fearless confidence of the Redbreast—the natural cause of the favour with which in all countries in Europe he is regarded.

The former instances are those of English occurrence; the following ones narrated by the late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, in his 'Natural History of Ireland,' will shew that there the Robin is the same as with us:—'In the very mild winter of 1831-2, a Redbreast very frequently made one at a breakfast table, helping itself to all that it wanted. In summer it built in one of the outhouses, and visited the kitchen daily, and in the autumn used to sing in the hall. Another was in the habit of entering a house to feed, another even to go into a lantern to eat the candle in it, and other sto alight on the hands of labourers to eat therefrom. One which was used to visit the abode of a tame Eagle at feeding time, flew on to his perch as soon as he had left it for the ground, and then alighted on the chain by which he was fastened; another visited the same cottage for four or five winters in succession, taking up its abode within doors altogether, until the return of spring. One of a pair, when the days were very fine and bright in October, regularly frequented a stable, and when perched upon the stall, sang without being in any degree disturbed by the general business of the place going forward, even within two or three feet of his station. A pair of Redbreasts that were assiduously watched during their nidification in a conservatory, were one morning found in great consternation, in consequence of their nest having been taken possession of by a bat, which they eventually compelled to change its quarters. A young Robin of the year, caught in the autumn, and kept in a cage, made its escape, but on the appearance of snow returned, and was evidently at home with the lady of the house and a servant who had been accustomed to feed it, shewing more partiality to them than to the other inmates.'

The Robin is very easily captured in a trap, more so than almost any other bird, but it only bears confinement at all well in the winter; and if kept for its own sake in severe weather, should be released when a change has come. 'It is always active and lively, and watchful of all that passes. If a new bird is put into the cage or aviary it inhabits, the Robin is the first that takes notice of it, and immediately approaching, utters its note of surprise, bows repeatedly with its peculiar dipping motion, erects its tail, and in various ways endeavours to express its interest or surprise. Its attention is particularly directed to young birds, either of its own or other species.'

The flight of this bird is usually rather quick and straight, mostly performed near the ground, and for only a short distance—from one neighbouring resting-place to another. It progresses by a few hops at a time, when it suddenly halts, tosses up its head or looks askance, and after a brief pause advances again.

The Robin feeds on various fruits, seeds, and berries, such as elderberries and blackberries, as also on flies, beetles, and other insects, earwigs and worms; the larger are frequently held in one claw, and so picked: occasionally it will capture insects on the wing, sallying out at them time after time. The hard parts of any are cast up, as is done by the Hawks. One has been seen to attack the formidable stag beetle on the wing, when both fell together to the ground; what the result would have been was not ascertained, for the former flew away on the observer coming up. In the winter this bird frequently visits the sea-shore, searching among the sea-weed for small marine insects. In summer he eats not a few currants and other small fruits, with which the young are sometimes fed; but insects are his chief food. Its manner of feeding is not an assiduous pecking about, but it hops on for a few steps, and then halts, and then hops on again with a diligence of observation to which we for the moment are blind, though we presently are almost sure to see its successful result. Now and then it turns up the grass or leaves in search of or in pursuit of its prey. A little gravel is swallowed to aid the trituration of its food.

There is something peculiarly touching in the soft, sweet, and plaintive note of the Redbreast, especially when first re-heard again at the close of summer, when the leaves begin to fade and fall, and autumn gives presage of the storms and cold of returning winter. So likewise when winter has again in its turn passed away, and the first signs, though ever so faint, of long-wished-for spring begin to dawn, then is the well-known note a pleasant sound to the ear that loves the the country for the country's sake. The Robin in fact sings throughout the year, except while too much engaged with his family in the nest. And as for his annual, so also for his diurnal habit; retiring late to roost, his voice is heard in every lane and garden, while any glimmer of twilight remains, but then it ceases, and up he is betimes again after daybreak, before the sun, and his 'Good Morning' is a pleasant welcome to the early riser on the following day.

Two birds are often heard answering the one to the other from some little distance, especially in fine calm and clear evenings, but also even in dull or rainy weather, when many other kinds are dulled to silence. The one waits till the other has ended, before he begins, and thus the conversation is carried on. Either may been seen to stretch forward the head, and bend the neck to catch what is sung, offering no response until the other has ended what it had to say. The ordinary note is a 'tsit, tsit,' frequently accompanied by an upward flirt of the tail, and a shuffle of the wings. If alarmed for its young, the note of the Robin is peculiarly wailing.

'In a wild condition,' says Mr. Couch, 'birds of the same species will not sing near each other; and if the approach be too close, and the courage equal, a battle follows. Redbreasts offer a frequent example of this, and if an intruder ventures on the accustomed domain, the song may be low and warbling, or apparently reserved or suppressed, and neither of them will appear to condescend to notice the efforts of its competitor. But this restraint cannot endure long; the music becomes more developed—it rises higher; the attack is sudden, and the fight so violent, that they fall to the ground together, and one is killed, or both may be taken with the hand.' Two, fighting in the air, fell together into a hat that happened to be lying on the ground, and were both captured; on one occasion two of these birds caught fighting in a yard at Belfast were kept all night in separate cages; one was given its liberty early in the morning, and the other, seeming tamer, was kept with the intention of being permanently retained; so unhappy, however, did it appear, that it too was released. The other then came and attacked it again, when the tamer bird was again captured, and the wilder one flew away. In the evening, when the coast seemed to be clear, the former was again let go, but the other, from some ambush, again attacked, and this time killed it. One kept in a greenhouse at Merville, in the county of Antrim, killed every intruder of its own species, amounting to about two dozen, that entered the house; and and on an examination of three of the victims, a deep wound was found in the neck of each, evidently made by the bill of their antagonist. Another pair fighting, were singularly separated by a Duck, which went up to them for the evident purpose of parting them. Another pair fought till the leg and wing of one were broken.

'In speaking of the Robin,' says Mr. Jesse, 'I may observe that when they sing late in the autumn, it appears to be from rivalship, and that there are always two singing at the same time. If one of them is silenced, the other immediately ceases its song. I observe also that they always sing while they are preparing to fight with each other. The Redbreast is indeed a very pugnacious bird: I lately observed two of them, after giving the usual challenge, fight with so much animosity, that I could easily have caught them both, as they reeled close to my feet on a gravel walk. After some time one of them had the advantage, and would have killed his opponent, had they not been separated. Indeed these birds will frequently fight till one has lost his life. It has been asserted that the female Robin sings, and I am much inclined to be of this opinion, having heard two Robins sing at the same time in a situation where I had every reason to believe there was only a pair.'

Mr. Thompson mentions his having seen and heard about a dozen Redbreasts perched on the fruit trees in different parts of his garden, singing at the same time; and he adds that so many of them sending forth their notes at once, satisfied him that the young birds of the year take their part in the concert, and that the fact of every individual in view trilling its note together, favours the idea that the female bird is possessed of song. Several may at times be heard even in the depth of winter, and while the ground is covered with snow, singing and answering one another as at a more genial season, though not a gleam of sunshine may enliven the dreary scene. Their song has several times been heard in moonlight nights, and one kept in a cage has been known to sing when candles were brought into the room, and when there was music, to rival it with all his power.

Of a Redbreast kept in confinement Mr. Couch says, 'On placing a mirror near its cage, it immediately expressed the recognition of its fellow by a particular low and sweet note, and would give vent to its satisfaction in a loud song. In fine weather this bird was generally placed outside, and daily carolled his glad notes to his own image reflected from the window.' One taken in a trap was accompanied by a companion even into the house into which it was taken. In some instances they are sociable and friendly with other birds kept in confinement with them.

Nidification commences very early in the spring, and the eggs are usually laid about the beginning of April; but young birds have often been found in the nest by the end of March. In backward seasons they are usually later. Mr. Macgillivray mentions one seen on the 9th. of May, 1831, and another on the 2nd. of June, 1837, which he believed to be the first brood of that year. A Robin's nest containing several eggs was taken near York the first week in February, 1844, there being snow on the ground at the time, and the temperature ranging from 30° to 23° Fahrenheit: another, which had five eggs, was found at Moreton in the Marsh, in the second week of January, 1848; another, with the like number of eggs, in a garden at Wheldrake, near York, the 10th. of the same month; and one, also with eggs, near Belfast, on the 20th. of February, 1846. A nest with two eggs, on which the hen bird was sitting, was found near the end of November, 1851, at Gribton, Dumfriesshire, the seat of Francis Maxwell, Esq.

The nest of the Robin, which is built of fine stalks, moss, dried leaves, and grass, and lined with hair and wool, with sometimes a few feathers, is generally placed on a bank under the shelter of a bush, or sometimes in a bush itself, at a low height from the ground, and occasionally in a hole in a wall covered with ivy, a crevice in a rock, among fern and tangled roots—the entrance perhaps being through some very narrow aperture, or an ivy-clad tree. It measures about five inches and three quarters across, and two and a half in internal diameter. It is concealed with great care and success.

His late Majesty King William the Fourth had a part of the mizen-mast of the Victory, against which Lord Nelson was standing when he was mortally wounded, placed in a building in the grounds of Bushy Park when he resided there. A large shot had passed through this part of the mast, and in the hole it had left, a pair of Robins built their nest and reared their young. The relic was afterwards removed to the dining-room of the house, and is now in the armoury of Windsor Castle. 'Victoria pacem.'

'A Robin,' says Mr. Jesse, 'lately began its nest in a myrtle which was placed in the hall of a house belonging to a friend of mine in Hampshire. As the situation was considered rather an objectionable one, the nest was removed. The bird then began to build another on the cornice of the drawing-room, but, as this was a still more violent intrusion, it was not allowed to be completed. The Robin, thus baffled in two attempts, began a third nest in a new shoe, which was placed on a shelf in my friend's drawing-room. It was permitted to go on with its work until the nest was completed, but as the new shoe was likely to be wanted, and as it would not be benefited by being used as a cradle, the nest was carefully taken out, and deposited in an old shoe, which was put in the situation of the new one. Here what remained to be done to the nest was completed; the under part of the shoe was filled up with oak leaves, the eggs were deposited in the nest, and in due time hatched, the windows of the room being always left a little open for the entrance and egress of the birds. My friend informed me that it was pleasing to see the great confidence the Robins placed in him. Sometimes, in the morning, the old birds would settle on the top of his glass, nor did they seem the least alarmed at his presence.'

A loft is frequently built in, and in one instance, the nest having been obliged to be removed, for an alteration in the wall, the hen bird did not forsake it, though placed elsewhere, even while dislodged mortar and stones fell dangerously near her. A nest was placed on a shelf in a pantry, among some four-sided bottles, so that it was made of a square shape. When the housekeeper had to go in for any article, the bird, instead of flying out of the window, as might have been expected, alighted on the floor till she had gone, when it immediately returned to its nest. The eggs were eventually forsaken, and a new nest, the work probably of the same bird, was made in the room over it, which happened to be a workshop for a museum. At first its absence was desired more than its company, and it was endeavoured to be scared by the sight of some fierce-looking stuffed animals, but it seemed to be aware that the lion was dead, and eventually fixed its abode on the head of a shark, enshrouded by the tail of an alligator. Two ladies at Larne, seeing a Robin anxious to build, placed a box in the porch of the house for its accommodation, which it speedily occupied. Another pair resorted for nidification to a hole left by a knot in one of the timbers of a ship under repair, and even the deafening sound of the driving of the trenails close to it did not affect the quiet tenacity with which it kept its place. One, taken from its nest, stayed in the hand of the person who found it, and on his putting it back again, remained till the eggs were hatched the following day.

Mr. Jesse relates the following:—'A gentleman had directed a waggon to be packed, intending to send it to Worthing, where he himself was going. For some reason his journey was delayed, and he therefore directed that the waggon should be placed in a shed in the yard, packed as it was, till it should be convenient for him to send it off. While it was in the shed, a pair of Robins built their nest among some straw in it, and had hatched their young just before it was sent away. One of the old birds, instead of being frightened away by the motion of the waggon, only left the nest from time to time for the purpose of flying to the nearest hedge for food for its young; and thus alternately affording warmth and nourishment to them, it arrived at Worthing. The affection of this bird having been observed by the waggoner, he took care in unloading not to disturb the Robin's nest; and the Robin and its young returned in safety to Walton Heath, being the place from whence they had set out; the distance travelled not being less than one hundred miles. Whether it was the male or female Robin which kept with the waggon I have not been able to ascertain; but most probably the latter; for what will not a mother's love and a mother's tenderness induce her to do?'

'Amongst Robin Redbreasts,' says Bishop Stanley, 'many instances of strange selection have come to our knowledge, quite as singular as those hitherto mentioned. Thus, we know of one which attempted to build in the library of a gentleman's house, at least so it was suspected, from a few suspicious materials, such as dried leaves, etc., having been occasionally found amongst the shelves, without any person being able to ascertain from whence they came. Probably disappointed by perceiving they were swept away as soon as deposited, the domestic bird resolved to try another equally sheltered situation, and, accordingly, selected the dining-room, which, as the family never entered it till luncheon-time, she had all to herself from the moment the housemaid had done her duty in the morning and retired, leaving, as she was accustomed to do, the window open. How long the bird had carried on her operations unnoticed, we know not, but a servant accidentally moving the drapery of one of the window-curtains, discovered in the folds of a festoon the Robin's nest. In this instance the bird availed itself of a situation in which, during the greater portion of the day, she was in solitude and silence; but solitude and silence do not seem essential to all Robin Redbreasts, for we lately heard of a pair which took possession of a pigeon-hole book-shelf in a school, which was constantly frequented by seventy children. The hole selected was at the farthest extremity of the room, immediately above the heads of a junior class of little girls, from four to five years of age, who, much to their credit, never disturbed the bird. There she laid and hatched five eggs. One of the young ones died in a few days, and the body was carried off by the parent birds. The remaining four were regularly fed in the presence of the children, and in due time reared. Soon after their departure the old bird repaired the nest, and laid three more eggs, which she attended to with the same perseverance and success. We have often alluded to the frequent returns of birds to the same nests, and perhaps the most singular feature in this anecdote is that about twelve years ago a Robin built in that identical pigeon-hole. Why the visits were not renewed every year it is impossible to conjecture, but that the pair of the present year were either the same old birds, or young ones of the brood then reared in it, is more than probable, from the circumstance of this pigeon-hole being again selected, when others, forming the school library, within the same framework, would have equally suited the purpose. Another nest was constructed, and for two successive years, in a still more extraordinary situation, which we give, not on our own authority, but fully believing it corroborated, as it may in a manner be said to be, by the proofs of confidence already given. A few years ago, a pair of Robins took up their abode in the parish church of Hampton, in Warwickshire, and affixed their nest to the church Bible, as it lay on the reading-desk. The vicar would not allow the birds to be disturbed, and therefore supplied himself with another Bible, from which he read the lessons of the service. A similar instance occurred at Collingbourne Kingston Church, in Wiltshire, on the 13th. of April, 1834; the clerk, on looking out for the lessons of the day, perceived something under the Bible in the reading-desk, and in a hollow place, occasioned by the Bible's resting on a raised ledge, found a Robin's nest containing two eggs. The bird not having been disturbed, laid four more, which were hatched on the 4th. of May. The still more extraordinary part of the story is, that the cock bird actually brought food in its bill during Divine service, which is performed twice every Sunday; and it is further highly creditable to the parishioners, particularly the junior portion of them, that the birds were never molested, and not an attempt ever suspected to be made on the nest and eggs deposited in so hallowed a spot. We can remember, indeed, a Robin hopping more than once familiarly, as if aware how safe from peril it was at such a moment, upon our own Bible, as it lay open before us, reading the lessons on Christmas-day.'

Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, mentions one which built its nest in the curtain of a bed in an occupied house, but the window being closed against it, it laid an egg on the window-sill. This circumstance caused pity for the bird, the window was re-opened, and the egg placed in the nest, where the usual number was duly deposited and incubated.

Mr. John Cope, of Abbots Bromley, near Stafford, has obliged me with the following instances:—'A pair of Redbreasts built their nest on a part of a steam-engine continually in motion night and day, and close to the colliers at work, at the Heath colliery, Westbromwich, belonging to the Earl of Dartmouth, I believe in the year 1846 or 1847. Another pair, and a pair of Spotted Flycatchers, each built their nests in one post of a hovel in my orchard this year; the nests not more than six inches apart. One of the Redbreasts became attached to me by some means unknown; it attended me always when in the garden, and hopped on my feet when I turned up a worm. It now attends at the door, and will enter the house and perch near me for crumbs.'

In such situations it is ordinarily placed, but a variety of others are at times chosen, some of then whimsical enough. One pair built their nest in a disused saw-pit, and although after the female had begun to sit it was again worked in, and though the persons employed continued at their occupation close to the nest every day, during the hatching of the eggs and the rearing of the young, yet the old birds, apparently without alarm, completed their task. To begin a nest in a saw-pit in which work is being carried on, and to rear their young without fear of the men, is quite a common occurrence. Another pair reared three successive broods in an uninhabited cottage, adjoining a blacksmith's forge, the first nest being built in a child's cart, hung against the wall, and this, though constantly inspected by the neighbours who became aware of the circumstance, the second on a shelf close to an old mouse-trap, and the third on another shelf on a bundle of papers. The passing and re-passing of persons by the nest all through the day is often seemingly altogether unheeded. In one instance a nest has been observed placed in a school-room where there was a continual noise throughout the day. One has been known to be built in a watering-pot, hung up to the branch of an apple tree by a path in a garden, and several other instances of the like kind have occurred. Another in the window-curtain of a bed-room at Roydon Hall; and another behind a figure on the top of a small monument in Thorpe Church, the old ones entering through a broken pane of glass in a window, and feeding their young during Divine service. A pair of Robins quartered themselves with their nest in a bed-room in a gentleman's house; and another in a skull, dug up with a number of others, near the old wall of Clonmel, supposed to have lain buried there since the time when the town was beseiged by Oliver Cromwell, who doubtless 'made a breach in the battlement,' as in the celebrated castle of Blarney, in the adjoining county. Whether Cavalier or Roundhead had owned the skull, it would puzzle Old Mortality himself, or any other antiquary to decide—'Pulvis et umbra sumus.'

Mr. Frank Clifford, of Elvedon Rectory, near Thetford, mentions one which began to build on the top of a book-case in a study. Being disturbed from thence, the next day she laid an egg on the carpet in the drawing-room, and began another nest in a bed-room, on the top of the bed. The housemaid turned it out several times, but as soon as her back was turned, Robinetta resumed her work, so that at last the room window was shut to keep her out. She then laid another egg in the drawing-room, and then attempted to establish her quarters in a store-room, but here too her room seems to have been desired rather than her company, so that she was banished thencefrom also. For several days she still continued hovering about her favourite haunts, but never again attempted to enter the house.

Another singular circumstance occurred to the same family the same year.—They had a small box nailed to a gate-post by the road side for the postman to drop their letters into as he passed, and to hold others intended for him to take. The aperture in the lid was only large enough to admit a newspaper, but through this a Robin used to pass, and to convey into the box materials for a nest, which was duly finished and a number of eggs laid. A flower-pot in a garden is a by no means unfrequent receptacle. In 1851 a nest was built in a watering-can hung up against the wall of a house in Union Terrace, York, and six eggs were laid in it.

Gentle reader, if indeed you be of gentle blood, and will read the following touching lines of the poet Thompson, descriptive of the return of a bereaved parent bird to her robbed home: if ever you have plundered a Robin's nest, or that of any other bird, let me hope that you will 'steal no more:'—

————'To the ground the vain provision falls!
Her pinions ruffle, and, low drooping, scarce
Can bear the mourner to the poplar shade;
Where, all abandoned to despair, she sings
Her sorrows through the night; and on the bough
Sole sitting, still at every dying fall
Takes up again her lamentable strain
Of winding woe; till wide around, the woods
Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.'

Here is no 'poetic license,' but if you think there is, the following well written 'plain prose' of the amiable Mr. Jesse will satisfy the possible doubt:—'I had an opportunity,' he writes in his 'Gleanings in Natural History,' 'this summer of witnessing the distress of a Robin, when, on returning to her nest with food for her young, she discovered that they had disappeared. Her low and plaintive wailings were incessant. She appeared to seek for them among the neighbouring bushes, now and then changing her mournful cry into one which seemed like a call to her brood to come to her. She kept the food in her mouth for a short time, but when she found that her cries were unanswered, let it fall to the ground.'

So also Virgil, though speaking of a different species, in his 'Fourth Georgic,' for nature was the same eighteen hundred years ago as she is now,—

'Qualis populeâ mœrens philomela sub umbrâ
Amissos queritur fœtus, quos durus arator
Observans nido inplumes detraxit: at illa
Flet noctem, ramoque sedens, miserabile carmen
Integrat, et mæstis late loca quæstibus implet.'

Thus well rendered by Dryden—

'So, close in poplar shades, her children gone,
The mother Nightingale laments alone,
Whose nest some prying churl had found, and thence
By stealth convey'd the unfeather'd innocence.
But she supplies the night with mournful strains,
And melancholy music fills the plains.'

The eggs, generally five or six in number, are of a delicate pale reddish white, faintly freckled with rather darker red, most so at the larger end, where a zone or belt is sometimes formed. Some are entirely white. N. Rowe, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, has written me word of five eggs found in the elegant gardens of that, my own, college, whose 'classic shades' I so well remember, and which were quite white and spotless. He also tells me since of a nest and eggs taken near Exeter on New Year's day, 1853. My friend E. C. Taylor, Esq., of Kirkham Abbey, Yorkshire, has forwarded me one of the like colour, found in a nest in that beautiful neighbourhood, my own, as I may call it, through the tie of property and former residence.

Male; length, five inches and nearly three quarters; bill, brownish black; the red of the breast reaches over its base; iris, black, large, and lustrous; the red of the breast narrowly surrounds it. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, yellowish olive brown; chin, throat, and breast on the upper part, orange red, bordered with bluish grey; on the lower part the latter is white, and pale brown on the sides; back, yellowish olive brown. The wings, which expand to a trifle over nine inches, have the first feather about half the length of the second, the third, fourth, and fifth nearly equal, but the fourth the longest in the wing, the fifth scarcely shorter, the sixth a little longer than the second; underneath they are dusky grey: greater and lesser wing coverts, some of them tipped with buff; primaries and secondaries, greyish brown, their outer edges olive green; greater and lesser under wing coverts, tinged with yellow. Tail, yellowish olive brown with a tinge also of green, their outer edges, especially at the base, reddish brown, and obliquely pointed; underneath, it is dusky grey: the feathers are narrow. Upper tail coverts, yellowish olive brown; under tail coverts, pale brown; legs, toes, and claws, yellowish brown. As the plumage becomes old the olive green of the upper parts become tinged with grey, the wings and tail are faded, and the red of the neck and breast is paler or more yellowish.

The female is scarcely so large as the male, and her colours not so bright; length, five inches and a half; eyelids, black, as in the male; expanse of the wings, nine inches.

The young bird differs totally in colour from the adult. At first it is sparingly covered with loose down of a greyish brown colour. When fully fledged, the upper bill is light purple brown, the edges yellow, the lower bill yellowish on its sides and the chief part of the remainder, and dark brown at the end. The head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, have the brown feathers mottled with dull orange and buff, with pale olive brown tips, chin, throat, and breast, tinged with dull reddish or yellowish brown, the feathers margined with darker brown. The back has the brown feathers mottled with buff or pale brown tips. Greater and lesser wing coverts, partially tipped with dull orange buff, or very pale brown; toes, pale yellowish red, paler underneath.

After the first autumnal moult the young birds resemble the female, but the red of the breast is more tinged with orange; the legs dark brown.

Varieties are not of very great rarity. The Rev. R. P. Alington records in the 'Naturalist,' old series, one which had the wing primaries white. In the same work, vol. ii, page 53, I mentioned one which had the mandibles slightly crossed. This year also, February, 1853, while waiting for a train at the Hutton station, on the York and Scarborough line, one came into the room in search of food, the ground being covered with snow, and, having caught it for a moment, I saw that the lower bill was almost entirely gone, yet the bird appeared in good condition. How it could have managed, or does manage, is a difficulty to me, as it must, I fear, be in some degree to itself.

One has been seen which had the part which is usually red a light bluish grey, the back and wings bluish green. White ones are not very unfrequent; others are greyish white; some yellowish white. One has been seen which had the whole of the primary and secondary feathers of the wings white, as also those of the tail, with the exception of the tips, which were of a dull grey colour: it was a young bird of the year. One all but entirely white—one of the primaries slightly edged with brown; one pale buff, with the usual red breast; one with the bill white, the back white, with a few streaks of light brown, the breast with more white than usual, the wings nearly all white, with a few pale olive feathers, the legs very light coloured, the breast red; one with the whole upper plumage a very light fawn-colour, the quills and larger feathers of the wing whitish, the red breast retained, the legs and toes much lighter coloured than usual. Of a brood of young Robins, two of which were white, and one partially so, all moulted into the usual colour.

BLUEBREAST.

BLUE-THROATED WARBLER. BLUE-THROATED REDSTART.
BLUE-THROATED ROBIN.

Sylvia suecica,	JENYNS.
Motacilla suecica,	BEWICK.
Phœnicura suecica,	SELBY. GOULD.
Ficedula suecica,	EYTON. BECHSTEIN.
Curruca suecica,	SELBY.

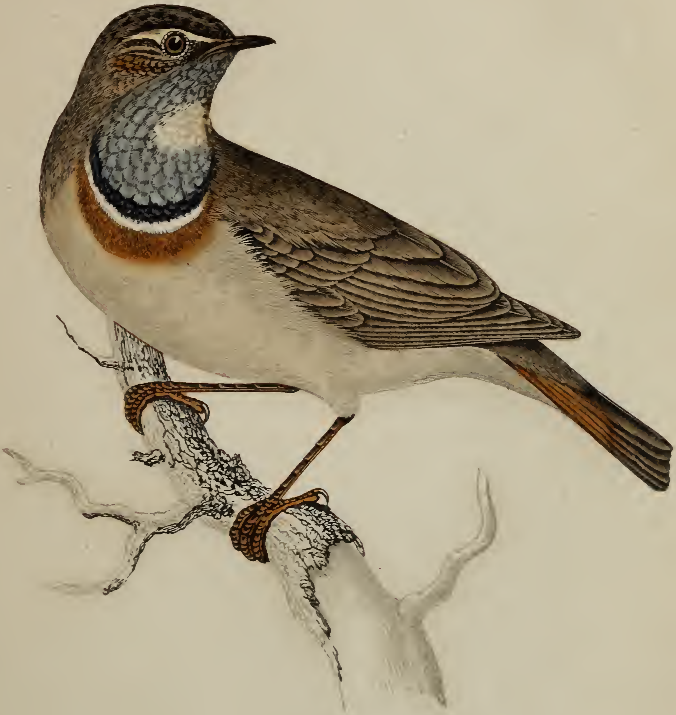
Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Suecica*—Of Sweden.

THIS elegant bird, whose bright plumage reminds one of the gay colours indicative of the tropical regions, occurs throughout Europe; but almost exclusively in the summer—very few being ever seen in the winter. It is found as far north as Russia, Norway, Siberia, Lapland, Finland, Bothnia, and the northern parts of Sweden, as also in Greece, France, and Holland, the southernmost parts of Spain, Germany, Thuringia, Prussia, and Italy. It is least frequent on the western side of the continent. In the north of Africa it is found in the winter.

It is said to frequent low marshy grounds, the borders of streams, and the outskirts of forests; but if the season be ungenial and backward, it approaches dwellings and farmsteads in search of food. Towards the autumn it advances into the more cultivated districts for the like purpose, probably with its family, whose additional wants have to be supplied.

Of these birds one was shot at Margate in September, 1842, so Edward Cole, Esq. has informed me; one also was shot by Mr. T. Embledon, on Newcastle Town Moor, in May, 1826; another in Dorsetshire, and one, a male, was found dead upon the beach near Yarmouth, Norfolk, on the 21st. of September, 1841.

The Bluebreast migrates northwards in the spring, and



BLUEBREAST.

southwards in the autumn, the former at the end of March or beginning of April, the latter in the end of August or beginning of September. They perform their migrations in large flights, 'compagnions de voyage.'

This species has a habit of continually spreading its tail, which it also moves up and down after the manner of the Redbreast. It is thought very good for the table, and is often served up on the continent. Like the Robin, it is of solitary and pugnacious habits, but may readily be kept in confinement, and becomes very familiar. It roosts upon the ground, and is fond of bathing itself.

In its flight also, which is performed near the ground, and is a series of springs, it resembles that species. It does not run, but advances quickly by hopping, the wings drooped and the tail elevated, and when stationary, stands very upright, displaying the beautiful cærulean blue of its breast, and the small white cloud on its centre.

Its food consists of insects and their larvæ, worms, and berries.

The note is described as very pleasing, and Bechstein says that it is of a double sound. It utters its song from the top of some bush, the tail outspread at the time, from whence, if alarmed, it drops into the concealment of the underwood beneath. It also sings in the air, rising to a moderate height, where it disports itself in the way that the Wood Lark does, and descending to a resting-place some little distance off: it is said to sing during the night. If the nest be approached, it utters a note of anger or alarm: its song is commenced with the earliest dawn of day. The ordinary note is described by Meyer as resembling the words 'tack, tack,' 'feed, feed.'

The nest is placed on the ground, among the larger herbage, on the sides of banks, and among low brushwood. It is well concealed, and is composed of dried grass and a little moss, the blossoms of the reed, leaves, small stalks, and roots, and is lined with finer moss, hair, and the beautiful down of the cotton-grass. There are two broods, and the first is sometimes on the wing so early as the end of May. The male assists the female in the work of incubation.

The eggs are four or five, or six in number, and of a greenish blue colour. The shell is very delicate and fragile.

Male, length, five inches and a half to six inches; bill, dark brown at the tip, the remainder yellowish, lightest at the base; the feathers about its base are yellowish white; iris, dark brown, over it is a pale whitish streak; bristles surround the base of the bill. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, brown; chin, throat, and breast on its upper part, bright blue, with a silky white spot on its centre; below the blue is a black streak, then a line of white, succeeded by a broad band of bright chesnut, below which it is dull white, and on the sides light reddish brown or buff; back, brown.

The wings have the first feather very short, the second equal to the sixth, the third, fourth, and fifth nearly equal, but the fourth the longest in the wing; greater and lesser wing coverts, brown, the margins paler; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brown, the outer edges of the two latter lighter brown. The tail, which is rounded at the end, extends one inch beyond the tips of the closed wings; the two middle feathers brown, all the others bright chesnut on their basal half, and the outer half nearly black; under tail coverts, light reddish brown, inclining to grey; legs, pale brown; toes and claws, dusky brown.

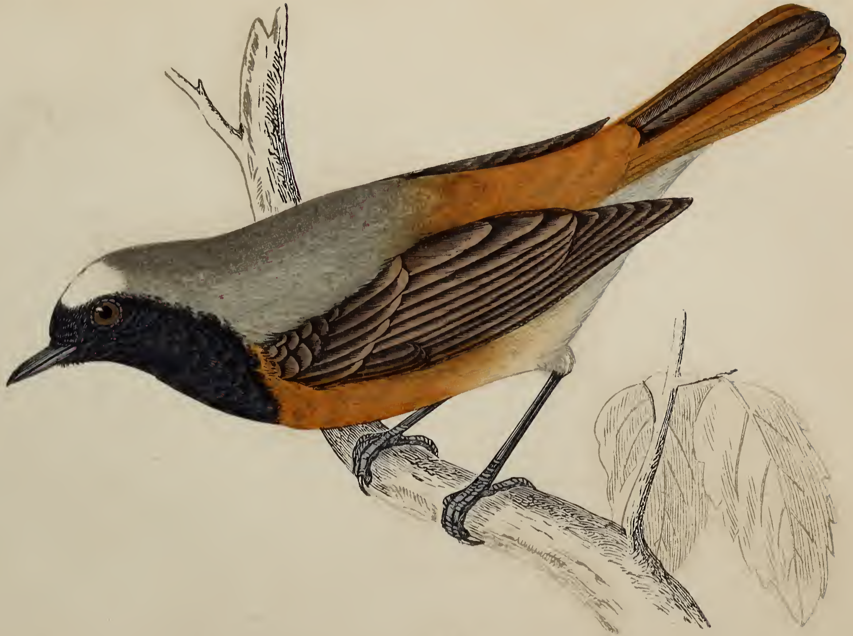
Female; iris, dark brown, over it is a yellowish white line; chin and throat, on the upper part, white, bounded by a crescent-shaped patch of dull blue mixed with some black, the horns of the crescent directed upwards; this is followed by pale reddish brown, and lower down by dull white, which also prevails on the sides. Tail, not so bright as in the male.

Some old females almost equal the male in the brilliancy of their colours.

The young are at first brown, mottled with a paler shade. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, dusky, with oval spots of reddish brown along the shafts of the feathers; chin, the same. The throat in the male has a large pale brown patch, indicative of the future white one; breast, dusky, with oval spots of reddish brown along the shafts. Under tail coverts, whitish.

The young male resembles the adult female, the blue colour advancing by degrees.

Individuals vary very considerably in colour, the tints being more or less bright, no doubt according to age.



REDSTART.

REDSTART.

RED TAIL. FIRE-TAIL. BRAN-TAIL. FIERY BRAN-TAIL.

Sylvia Phœnicurus,	Latham. Pennant.
Phœnicura ruticilla,	Selby. Swainson.
Ruticilla Phœnicurus,	Macgillivray.
Motacilla Phœnicurus,	Montagu.

Sylvia. *Sylva*—A wood. *Phœnicurus.* *Phœnix*—Purple—red. *Oura*—A tail.

This is an exceedingly pretty bird, and one which it is always interesting to watch. As it flirts out a little way from its accustomed cover, and as suddenly returns to it, you cannot help looking for its re-appearance with interest, even though in the constant habit of thus making its transient acquaintance.

It is a lively and graceful species, and, though not common, yet is not uncommon, in the districts throughout which it occurs. It frequents the most retired and the most sequestered scenes, and is to be seen in close propinquity to the inhabited house in the country, as well as in the wild and retired dingle, among the ivy-clad rocks of the overhanging inland cliff, and by the margin of the wood and the thicket, on the hawthorn hedge, and in the orchard, the trim garden and the tangled bank of the winding lane.

So also, it is not shy, nor yet familiar, for though, on the one hand, it never enters into a house, so, on the other, it is not found among the open and barren parts of the country, nor in places that are entirely destitute of wood, and fearlessly builds its nest in the crevices of the wall of an inhabited house.

The Redstart is distributed over the greater part of Europe, from Holland, France, Spain, and Italy, to Germany, Russia, Siberia, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. It is known also in Asia Minor, Persia, and Japan.

In this country it is least frequent on the western side of the island, but occurs in Cornwall and Wales, as well as in Yorkshire and Suffolk, Kent, Surrey, and Middlesex, Norfolk, Northumberland, Berkshire, Derbyshire, and Westmorland, and even in Sutherlandshire and other parts of Scotland; it breeds commonly about the wooded glens and gardens near Dunrobin Castle in that county, as also in Linlithgowshire and Edinburghshire.

In Ireland it is very rare: one was shot many years ago near Belfast in December, 1828, and another in the same neighbourhood; one, about the year 1830, near Kingstown; and one at Tanderagee, in the county of Armagh; at least there seems no doubt that the birds were all of this species: one was shot in the Queen's County in February, 1847.

In Orkney it is but an occasional visitor: a specimen was shot at Grainback, near Kirkwall, on the 24th. of May, 1847, and one in Sanday, by Mr. H. Moncrieff, in the winter of 1844. In the outer Hebrides it has not been noticed.

It is of a somewhat timid nature, but when the hen bird is sitting, the male is more than ordinarily visible in conspicuous situations near the nest: after the breeding season both birds retire rather further from observation. 'They are the most restless and suspicious of birds during this season of hatching and rearing their young; for when the female is sitting, her mate attentively watches over her safety, giving immediate notice of the approach of any seemingly hostile thing, by a constant repetition of one or two querulous notes, monitory to her, or menacing to an intruder: but when the young are hatched, the very appearance of any suspicious creature sets the parents into an agony of agitation, and perching upon some dead branch or post, they persevere in one unceasing clamour till the object of their fear is removed: a Magpie near their haunts, with some reason, excites their terror greatly, which is expressed with unremitting vociferation. All this parental anxiety, however, is no longer in operation than during the helpless state of their offspring; which being enabled to provide their own requirements, gradually cease to be the objects of solicitude and care; they retire to some distant hedge, become shy and timid things, feeding in unobtrusive silence.'

It is of migratory habits, and visits us for a summer residence, arriving here the beginning or middle of April; in Scotland not till the latter end of that month, or the beginning of May. It has once been known on the 25th. of March. It retires again in August or September. On its first arrival it betakes itself to gardens or the neighbourhood of old walls.

The Redstart, though a bird of rather wary and retired habits, notwithstanding which, however, it frequently comes to build in towns and villages, is easily tamed, and becomes much attached to the person that feeds it, alighting on the hand in some instances, and eating out of it: one pair have been known to build in confinement. It has a habit of frequently shaking its tail, with an up-and-down motion, the feathers being laterally expanded at the same time; it also frequently dips the body up and down, particularly if apprehensive of the approach of any danger, often uttering a quick shrill note the while, and if disturbed falls, as it were, and glides along the opposite edge of the nearest cover to some neighbouring resting-place, to screen itself from observation.

It advances on the ground by a series of leaps

Its food consists of fruits and berries, currants, raspberries, elderberries, and others; ants and their eggs, worms and spiders, caterpillars, beetles, and other insects. These latter it both seeks on the ground and also on the wing, pursuing them in the air after the manner of the Flycatchers, flitting between times from branch to branch. The young are fed with caterpillars, and, doubtless, any other 'unconsidered trifles' suitable to their wants. The young on leaving the nest generally betake themselves to any neighbouring bushes, hedges, or trees, where for some days they are nourished by the parent birds, until able to forage for themselves. When they are abroad, these situations seem to be preferred to their previous lodging-places.

The Redstart is, even in its wild state, somewhat of a Mocking-bird; if brought up from the nest it may be taught to sing any tune that is whistled or sung to it; and individuals have been known to imitate very closely the notes of the Sparrow and the Chaffinch, the Garden Warbler and the Lesser Whitethroat. Its song is soft, melodious, and sweet, though not of extensive stave; and it has been heard after ten o'clock at night, and by three again in the morning. Its ordinary note, which is constantly heard throughout the day, especially in a tone of anxiety if any danger be apprehended, according to one writer, resembles the word 'chippoo;' Macgillivray, always accurate, likens it to the syllables 'oi-chit.' It is said to sing most in the morning and evening, and this is probably the case, as with other birds. It sometimes utters its song while on the wing, and even while flying from one station to another.

The nest, which is more or less well concealed, and is rather loosely constructed, is built of moss, dry grass, and leaves, and lined with hair and feathers. It is frequently placed in a hole in an old wall, under the eaves of a house, in a hollow or hole in a tree, or even between the branches of one, as also against a wall, if extraneous support is afforded. One has been known to have been placed in a watering-pot, others in flower-pots, and one in a hole in the ground, even where such a choice was not made from necessity. It is frequently placed close to or in the wall of a house, and that where persons are constantly passing, even within reach of the hand. Another has been known also placed on the ground under an inverted flower-pot; the hen bird successfully reared her brood, the flower-pot, which was at first unwittingly removed, having been replaced by the Rev. J. C. Atkinson, who relates the circumstance in the 'Zoologist,' page 355. Bishop Stanley mentions one he had known 'built on the narrow space between the gudgeons or narrow upright iron on which a garden door was hung; the bottom of the nest, of course, resting on the iron hinge, which must have shaken it every time the door was opened. Nevertheless, there she sat, in spite of all the inconvenience and publicity, exposed as she was to all who were constantly passing to and fro.' Another has been known in like manner to sit through the din of three looms at work from five o'clock in the morning until ten at night, within twelve feet of the nest. The same situation, if the birds have been undisturbed, is frequently resorted to from year to year. One pair have been known to revisit the same garden for sixteen seasons in succession: a pair resorted for four successive years to the ventilator of a stable. The female is sedulously devoted to her eggs or young, and will sometimes suffer herself to be touched before flying off from the nest, if, however, they be molested she will forsake it; both birds indeed are most assiduous in their attentions to their brood, one or other of them being to be seen in constant motion, conveying food to them, or retiring in search of it. In one instance, the male bird having been killed while the hen was sitting, another partner joined the widow and became foster-father to the orphaned family.

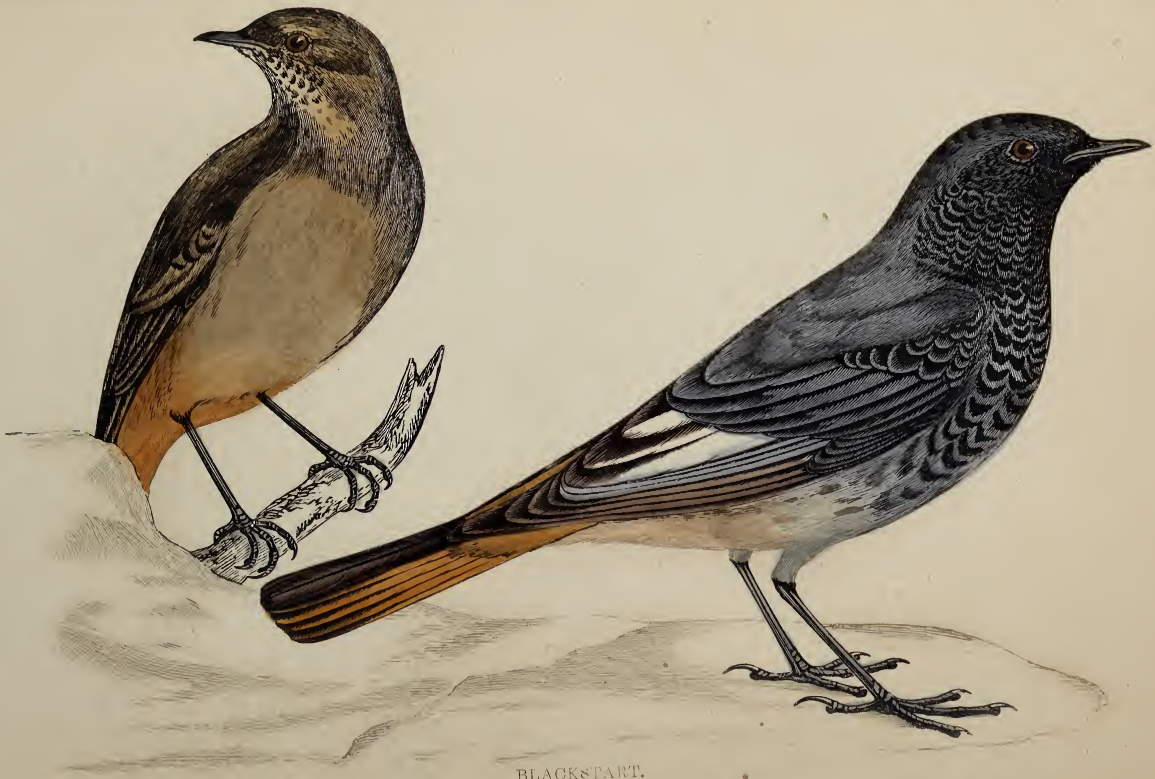
The eggs, which are of a uniform light greenish blue colour, are generally from four to six or seven in number, but occasionally so many as eight have been found. They much resemble those of the Dunnock, but are of a paler colour and a more slender and delicate form, as well as considerably smaller.

Male; weight, about three drachms and three quarters; length, five inches and a half to five and three quarters; bill, black, as is the space about it; its corners are yellow; iris, dark brown; over the eye is a line of white. Upper part of the forehead, white; head on the sides, black; crown, neck on the back, and nape, deep bluish grey, tinged with light brown; chin and throat, black; breast, rusty yellowish red on the upper part. below nearly white; back above, bluish grey, on the lower part rusty red. The wings have the first primary feather about a third of the length of the second, which is rather shorter than the sixth, the fourth the longest, the third and fifth scarcely shorter; greater wing coverts, brown, edged with paler; primaries and secondaries, greyish black; underneath, they are grey; greater and lesser under wing coverts, beautiful rust red. The tail, rather long, is rusty red, except the two middle feathers, which are brown on the inner webs; in some specimens they are wholly brown. The name Redstart, I may here observe, is derived from the words red and steort, the Saxon for a tail. Under tail coverts, reddish orange; legs, toes, and claws, blackish brown, with a tinge of red.

Female; length, about five inches and a quarter; head and crown, with a shade of grey brown; chin, dull white; throat, reddish white; breast, inclining to pale rufous, on the lower part reddish white; back, yellowish brown, with a shade of grey, on the lower part rusty red, but much duller than in the male. Greater and lesser wing coverts, primaries, and secondaries, greyish brown, margined with reddish; tail, rusty red, but much duller than in the male, as are the upper tail coverts; under tail coverts, paler. Very old females are said to approximate to the colour of the male.

In the young male of the year the white forehead is wanting; neck in front, variegated with white; the throat has the black intermixed with white feathers, as is the case with the orange on the breast; breast, mottled with yellowish and dusky brown; back, pale reddish brown, tinged with pale grey on each feather. Greater and lesser wing coverts, broadly edged with pale brown; tail and tail coverts, rufous. At the end of the summer, the edges of the feathers being worn, the back becomes more grey, the black and the red less edged, and the wings and tail lighter.

A variety of a white colour was shot by Martin Curtler, Esq., of Bevere House, Worcester, in June, 1849.



BLACKSTART.

BLACKSTART.

BLACK REDSTART. BLACK RED-TAIL. TITHYS REDSTART.

Sylvia Tithys,	JENYNS.
" *Gibraltariensis.*	LATHAM.
Phœnicura Tithys,	GOULD. SELBY.
Ficedula Tithys,	EYTON.
Motacilla atrata,	

Sylvia. *Sylva*—A wood. *Tithys*—...........

THIS species is rather common in the southern parts of Europe, Germany. Thuringia, France, Greece, Spain, Switzerland, and Italy, but very rare in the more northern parts, in Sweden, namely, and also in Holland, the character of the latter country being of course unsuited to its Alpine habits—the very Antipodes of them. The Prince of Musignano obtained one at sea in the spring of 1828, four hundred miles to the west of Africa, during a gale from the eastward: it was caught, together with some other small birds, in the rigging of the ship. The Blackstart has been met with also in Asia.

This very neat and elegant bird, first made known as a British one by Mr. Gould, is but of rare occurrence also, generally speaking, in this country. I am much obliged and indebted to John Gatcombe, Esq., of Wyndham Place, Plymouth, for a highly-finished drawing of the male and female, the latter the first mature one as yet depicted, and from which the plate is taken. In Yorkshire, two or three are stated by Mr. Allis, on the authority of Mr. H. Denny, to have been caught by some bird-catchers at Osmondthorpe.

The earliest recorded one, before alluded to, was captured at Kilburn, near London, in the month of October, 1829, and another has since been observed in the Regent's Park.

One was obtained at Bristol in 1830; one at Worthing in 1849; two at Hollington in 1849; one, a male, at Piddinghoe, near Lewes, on the 31st. of March, and another on the 7th. of April, 1850; one near Lewes, on the 20th. of November, 1849; one by Mr. J. B. Ellman on the 20th. of March, 1851; and one at Brighton, Sussex, in 1830, near which place six others were subsequently procured by Mr. George Swaysland, one at Hove on the 16th. of October, 1839, another on the 3rd. of the following December, the remainder, three males and a female, afterwards, one of the former in March, 1843, one also on the 26th. of November, 1851; one at Ralton, near Eastbourne, in the same county, in April, 1852; one near Oxford in March, 1852; one near Swanpool, in Cornwall, in May, 1847; and one in Norfolk, about the first week in November, 1849. One was shot near Bristol in December, 1835, while flying about in company with some Stonechats among furze bushes; others have occurred, as hereafter noticed, in an inland county.

A male was shot on the rocks under Plymouth citadel by John Gatcombe, Esq., as he informs me, in March, 1849, and a female in November, 1850. Four have been procured, and five or six others seen, near Penzance, Cornwall; one, believed to be a female, captured by some boys at Larigan, between that place and Newlyn; one shot near Marazion, in January, 1842, by Mr. Vingoe, of Penzance; another near Larigan in December, 1842; and a fourth by Alfred Greenwood, Esq., near Marazion, on the 8th. of February, 1843; one at Perran at the end of March, or beginning of April, 1843; and one or two at Hayle on the 28th. of November in the same year; one near Falmouth in 1849. William Felkin, Esq., Junior, of Carrington, near Nottingham, has written me word of one killed near London; another was shot near Alverstoke, Hampshire; and another, on the 2nd. of December, 1842, near Bonchurch, in the Isle of Wight. Two at Teignmouth, Devonshire, where another had been previously procured, one on the 3rd. and the other on the 10th. of January, 1844, by Robert C. R. Jordan, Esq. and his brother, who subsequently saw several others, and procured a male on the 30th. of that month, and a female on the 21st. of February; about twenty more were procured near Devonport, in the same county, between the months of November, 1843, and February, 1844, as recorded in the 'Zoologist,' pages 495-6, by W. S. Hore, Esq.; one, a female, in Torbay in November, 1849, and another, a male, in 1847; so also R. A. Julian, Esq., Junior, relates in 'The Naturalist,' volume i, page 44, that upwards of twenty were procured in the year 1850, sixteen of them by one person, in the neighbourhood of Plymouth and Devonport, in Devonshire, and Mount Edgecombe, in Cornwall. One was obtained at Bembridge, in the Isle of Wight, by A. G. More, Esq., on the 9th. of December, 1852.

In Ireland, one was shot near Wexford in February, 1836; one on a cliff near Youghall, in the county of Cork, in January, 1843; one at Castlefreke, near Rosscarberry, in the west of the county of Cork, in the first week in November, 1845; another, a female, was taken on board a steam-vessel on the 5th. of November, 1841, when midway between Belfast and Glasgow. One was taken in Scotland by Provost Sinclair in 1851, in his garden at Cullen, recorded by Mr. Edward, of Banff, in 'The Naturalist,' vol. i, page 145.

This bird addicts itself to mountains, hilly, rocky, and stony places, but it also in the breeding-season frequents villages and towns, where it shews its natural predilection for elevated situations, by resorting to the highest buildings, towers, steeples, churches, and castles, in the same way that we see sheep, and even the youngest lambs, exhibiting a similar instinct by choosing the summit of the most humble ridge on which to recline, as would their kindred, the wild goats, for whom 'the high hills are a refuge,' delight to peer at you from the giddy peak of some overhanging crag or dangerous precipice, to them a secure resting-place, whereon they find a safe footing, and from whence they look down with scorn on the plain below. These are the situations in which the Blackstart too delights, and here, even above the last region of vegetation, it passes the summer time among the hoary rocks, the broken fragments of the mountain's former peak, which have in ages past been reft from their place by some fearful force from within or without, or have yielded to the universal law of decay, to which even the 'sturdy rock, for all his strength,' must in time inevitably submit.

They are gay, lively, and active birds, and of a shy nature, but nevertheless appear to be easily caught in traps.

These birds usually arrive in this country the first week in November, and in one instance have been observed so soon as the 28th. of October; they depart again at the end of March; or beginning of April. In mild seasons they have been known to remain throughout the year in Switzerland, finding a milder temperature in the warm and sheltered gorges—the humble protected by the lofty and the great, the lowly valley by the regal mountain so elevated above it, towering, as it does, towards the sky with its glittering crown of perpetual snow.

The flight of the Blackstart is light and quick, and it rises and falls in its sportive evolutions with much elegance and ease. In walking, they are very erect, and they osciliate the tail in the same manner as the other species, and have also a dipping motion of the body, especially if alarmed.

Their food consists of berries and small fruits, worms, larvæ, and insects; the latter they too pursue on the wing, in the same way that the Flycatchers do.

The ordinary note is likened by Meyer to the words 'fid-fid,' 'tack-tack.' Its song, which is clear, but not extensive, is begun with the earliest dawn, and is hardly put an end to by the return of darkness or the close of day; it is, however, somewhat intermitted while a young family has to be provided for—a cause sufficient to silence other jocund voices beside those of the birds—but otherwise is continued throughout the year: the common note just described is then constantly repeated.

Two broods are frequently reared in the year, the first being hatched by the beginning of May, and the second soon following it, being abroad in June. The same situation is frequently returned to year after year. The nest, which is rather large, is placed among the clefts of stones or rocks, and also in the holes of walls and ruins, the spires, towers, and higher parts of churches, and the roofs of houses. It is formed of grasses, moss, wool, and the dry stalks and fibres of plants, and is lined more or less with hair or feathers.

The young are hatched after thirteen days' incubation.

The eggs are from five to seven in number, and of a very pure glossy white in colour, and the shell peculiarly fagile and transparent. I have been favoured by R. W. Hawkins, Esq., of Rugeley, Staffordshire, with the nest and egg of this bird, taken at Longdon.

This species is also of a slender form. Male; length, six inches and a quarter; bill, black, compressed towards the tip; iris, blackish brown; over it is a narrow black mark. Forehead, banded with black, the feathers margined with light grey; head on the sides, black, the feathers margined with light grey. Crown, neck on the back and sides, and nape, greyish black, with a tinge of slate-coloured blue; chin, throat, and breast on the upper part and sides, slate black, the feathers margined with light grey; lower down the breast is light grey, and ultimately greyish white; back on the upper part, greyish black; on the lower part brownish red.

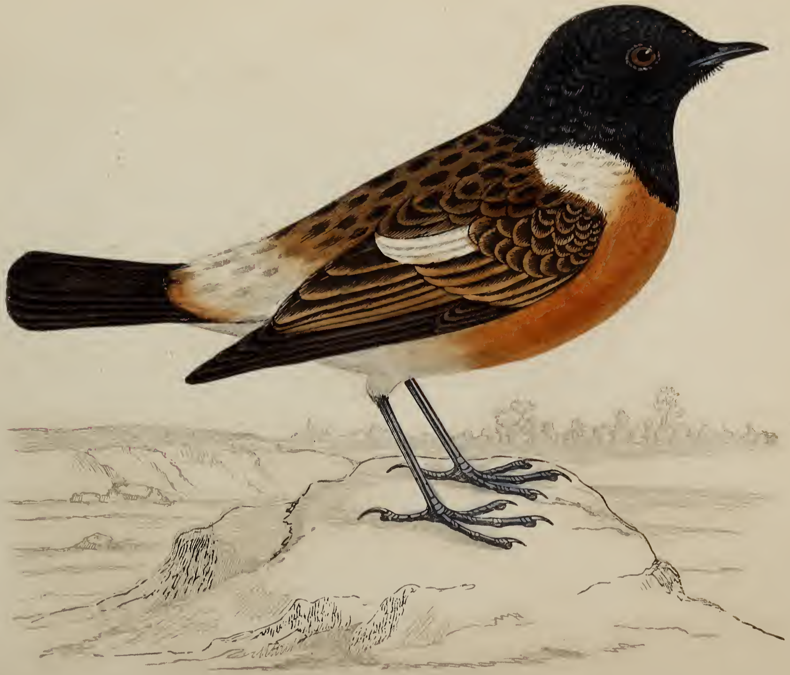
The wings have the first feather scarcely an inch long, the second shorter than the third, which is the longest, but scarcely exceeding the fourth and fifth, which are equal, the sixth not quite so long as the third, the seventh of the same length as the second; greater and lesser wing coverts, greyish black, edged with lighter grey; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dusky greyish black, the two latter edged with greyish white, of which colour is a large portion of the outer web of the second-named, forming a white patch when the wings are closed—the primaries underneath are leaden grey; greater and lesser under wing coverts, dull greyish white. Tail, light chesnut red, except the two middle feathers, which are dark reddish brown, inclining to black, edged with brownish orange. Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, says, that on two of the Irish specimens the tail was tipped with black, which colour prevailed particularly on the outer web of the feathers—underneath it is chesnut brown; upper tail coverts, brownish red; under tail coverts, dull pale reddish. Legs, toes, and claws, black.

The moult takes place in August.

The female has the whole of the upper parts dark yellowish brown. Length, five inches and three quarters; chin, yellowish brown, with blackish spots; throat, darker brown; breast, light yellowish grey; back, on the lower part, reddish brown. Primaries and secondaries, darker than the rest of the plumage, the latter broadly margined with yellowish white; tertiaries, also edged with buff white. Tail, brownish red, but duller than in the male; under tail coverts, dull pale reddish brown.

The young resemble the female until the following spring. The male bird is of a darker grey than the female, and the lower part of the back of a lighter red. The colour would appear to darken with age.

'In plumage,' says Mr. Gatcombe, in 'The Naturalist,' volume i, page 227, 'these birds vary considerably: I have obtained them with black breasts, yet without a shade of white on the tertials; then again with the white on the wings very strong, and not a sign of black on the breast: this appears to me very strange, as the black almost invariably appears before the white. The young males of the year are easily distinguished from the females, by being of a more uniform slate grey, without the brown tinge that is observable in the female It appears that the males are several years in arriving at their full plumage; in very old birds the back is almost as dark as the breast.'



STONECHAT.

STONECHAT.

STONECHATTER. STONECLINK. STONE SMITH.
MOOR TITLING. BLACK CAP.

Sylvia rubicola,	PENNANT.
Motacilla Tschecautschia,	GMELIN.
" *rubicola,*	MONTAGU. BEWICK.
Saxicola rubicola,	FLEMING. SELBY.
Œnanthe nostra tertia,	RAY. WILLUGHBY.

Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Rubicola. Rubus*—A bramble.
Colo—To inhabit.

THIS species is extensively distributed, being found throughout Europe in Holland, Germany, Switzerland, France, and Italy, as also, it is said, in some parts of Russia. In Asia it has been noticed in different parts of Hindostan, and in Asia Minor, as also, according to M. Temminck, in Japan. In Africa Le Vaillant and Dr. Smith obtained specimens at the Cape of Good Hope.

In England, though nowhere abundant, it is not uncommon in suitable localities in all parts of the island, Yorkshire, Dorsetshire, Devonshire, Cornwall, Suffolk, Norfolk, Northumberland, and other counties; in Ireland also, Scotland so far north as Sutherlandshire, and in the Hebrides. In the Orkneys it makes its appearance but rarely; one was shot near Kirkwall in 1847.

It frequents uncultivated places, the sides of cliffs by the sea, open moors and heaths, warrens and chases, commons and downs, at least those parts of such where low brushwood, the wild broom, and the gorse, with its golden blossoms, so deservedly the admiration of Linnæus when in this country he for the first time saw it, the bramble, the juniper, and the sloe, afford it alike a shelter and a home. Such lonely spots it enlivens with its gay and handsome appearance, its varied and conspicuous plumage presenting an attractive object, to which, if otherwise unobservant of it, its singular note will probably draw your attention.

It is of a restless and noisy habit, and seldom remains long in one spot, perching on the topmost part of a bush or stone, or hanging on some reed that bends with its weight, and flying down from thence to pick up something from the ground; on the latter, however, it but seldom stops for any lengthened space.

The Stonechat is a hardy bird, and remains with us throughout the year; but would seem to make a partial home migration in the autumn, leaving the wilder for more sheltered and warmer situations; the young birds at all events seem to quit their place, if the parents remain behind About the end of March they return again to their haunts.

They are found singly or in pairs, though several individuals may frequently be seen near together in the same immediate neighbourhood. In very severe winters they come into gardens, and approach quite close to cottages and houses. They, too, like others of their class, have a frequent movement of the body and the tail. They are very anxious for their young, if danger approaches, and keep flying about in evident alarm as long as it appears to threaten. They often seem to vanish suddenly from sight, dropping as it were, from where they stood, and then after flying close to the ground for some way, rise up again to some other resting-place. They are not shy in their habits, though rather wary. They may be kept if taken from the nest, but only with great care.

The flight of this species is, for the most part, a succession of short flits or starts. They roost upon the ground, and are sometimes taken by bird-catchers in their nets.

Their food is made up of insects, larvæ, and worms; the former they frequently take on the wing, making short sallies from their stand on the top of a bush.

The ordinary note of this bird, which is somewhat of a melancholy cast, is a 'chat' 'chat, chat,' resembling the sound produced by striking two stones together; hence the name of the bird, unless it be derived from its supposed habit of frequenting stony places, which however is not the case, farther than that barren districts, which are its favourite resort, are for the most part stony, not having come under the hand of the cultivator—these are the two roots of the name, and 'utrum horum mavis accipe.' Buffon likens the note to the word 'ouistrata;' and Gmelin to that which he has assigned in consequence as its specific name.

The song of the Stonechat is of little power, but soft, low, and sweet. It is uttered either from the top of some bush, or when hovering for a short space at a low elevation above it. It is seldom heard before the beginning of April, or after the middle of June, but sometimes so early as the middle of February. The author of the 'British Song Birds' registers a notion that the name of 'Wheatear' was intended for the present species, as indicative of the 'noise it makes while hopping about the stones!' Yarrell says it imitates the notes of other birds. The parents are very clamorous when they are engaged with their young, shewing great anxiety to draw any strangers from the nest, and uttering incessantly their short snapping note.

These birds pair in March, and commence building towards the end of that month.

The nest, which is large and loosely put together, and composed of moss, dry grass, and fibrous roots, or heath, lined with hair and feathers, and sometimes with wool, is placed among the grass, or other herbage, at the bottom of a furze, or other bush, or in the bush itself, as also in heather, and even, occasionally, in some neighbouring hedge, adjoining the open ground which the bird frequents. It is exceedingly difficult to find, on account of its situation in the middle of a cluster of whin bushes—such not admitting of the most easy access, the female also sitting very close, and, when off the nest, being very watchful of all your movements, hopping quickly from bush to bush, and disappearing suddenly by retreat into the cover.

The eggs, generally five or six in number, rarely seven, are of a pale greyish or greenish blue colour, the larger end minutely speckled with dull reddish brown. They are laid the middle or latter end of April, sometimes in the earlier part of that month; and have been known so late as the 12th. of July—perhaps a second brood.

The young are usually hatched by about the middle of May, and are abroad by the end of that month, or the beginning of June. They have been seen coming out from under a bush to be fed by the old ones, and then immediately retiring to their concealment.

Male; weight, five drachms; length, five inches and a quarter, to five and a half; bill, black; iris, dark brown; bristles are furnished at the base of the bill; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, nearly black, the feathers broadly edged with rufous brown after the autumnal moult; neck on the sides, white, tinged with light red—the white less pure after the summer. Chin and throat, black, the feathers edged with rufous brown after the moult; breast, rich orange chesnut brown, fading into yellowish white lower down: it is paler after the summer. Back, black, the feathers edged with yellowish brown, most so after the autumnal moult.

The wings, which expand to the width of nine inches, have the first quill feather less than half as long as the second, which is much shorter than the third, but nearly equal to the seventh; the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth nearly equal, but the fourth rather the longest; underneath they are leaden grey, edged with dull white. Greater and lesser wing coverts, blackish brown, margined with rufous brown after the autumnal moult; those that cover the tertiaries white, but partly hidden by the others; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brownish black, edged with pale reddish brown, most so after the moult. Tail, short and even, and nearly black, tipped with rufous brown after the autumnal moult, the outer feathers margined with brownish white; upper tail coverts, white, tipped with reddish, and having a dusky spot; under tail coverts, nearly white. Legs, toes, and claws, black.

Female; length, five inches and a quarter; bill, black; iris, dark brown. Head on the sides, dusky brown; crown, neck on the back and nape, brown, streaked with dusky and brownish red, the margins of each feather being of the latter colour, the white space on the sides of the neck less than in the male; the neck in front is yellowish brown. Chin and throat, blackish brown, mixed with light greyish brown; breast, yellowish brown, with a tinge of dull red; back, brown, bordered with buff. The wings extend to nearly nine inches in width; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brown, edged with buff, darker, and the white on the latter much smaller than in the male. Tail, brown, edged with buff, darker than in the male; upper tail coverts, yellowish red, with a dusky streak. Legs, toes, and claws, black.

The young at first are mottled with greyish white, subsequently the bill is dusky above, light brown beneath; iris, dark brown. Head on the sides, dusky, mottled with brown; on the crown, neck on the back, and nape, blackish brown, the centre of each feather marked in a triangular shape with light greyish or brownish yellow; chin and throat, greyish; breast, light yellowish brown, waved or mottled with a different shade, paler than in the male; back, greyish brown, the feathers spotted with dusky white at the end of each. Greater and lesser wing coverts, tipped partially with light red, and a few of the inner ones are more or less white; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brownish black, the two first of the former edged with brownish white, the others with brownish red. Tail, brownish black, the feathers edged with brownish red, the outer one with brownish white; upper tail coverts, reddish brown. Legs and toes, greyish brown.

The young males after the first moult resemble the adult female, and after the second they gradually come to their proper plumage. The moult is completed in November.

WHINCHAT.

GRASSCHAT. FURZECHAT.

Sylvia rubetra,	PENNANT.
Motacilla rubetra,	MONTAGU. BEWICK.
Saxicola rubetra,	FLEMING. SELBY.
Rubetra major,	BRISSON.
Œnanthe secunda,	RAY.

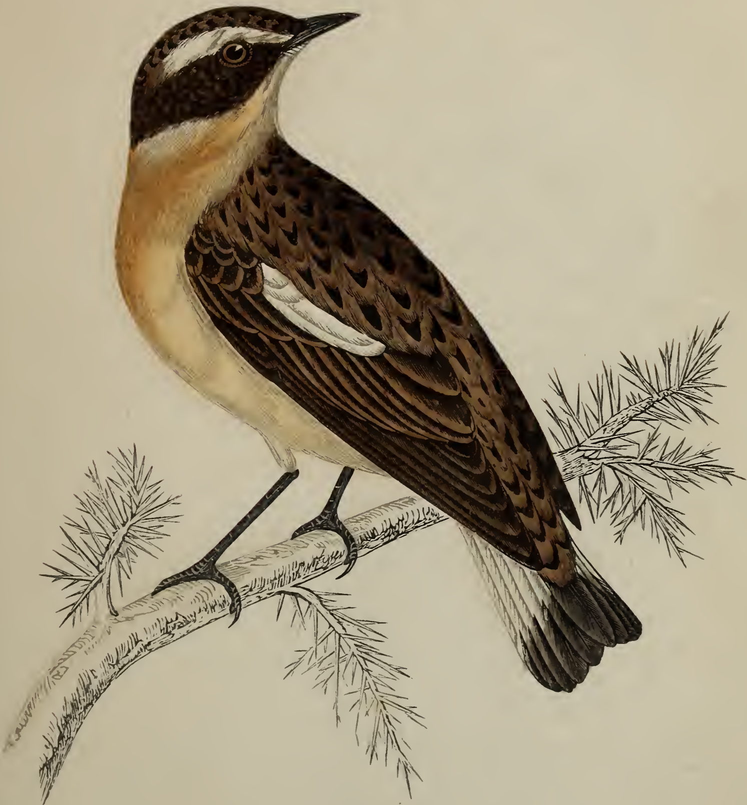
Sylvia. *Sylva*—A wood. *Rubetra.* *Rubetum*—A place where brambles or bushes grow.

THERE is something in the appearance of this bird, which, accustomed as one may have been to its constant recurrence summer after summer, still attracts the eye, as if the object were one which presented some novelty of form, or attractive peculiarity hitherto not observed, which could not but be regarded with new attention.

It is found in Europe—in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the temperate parts of Russia, and throughout the whole of the southern parts of the continent—France, Germany, Greece, Switzerland, Spain, and Italy, to the shores of the Mediterranean. It occurs also in Asia Minor.

In Yorkshire, this is one of the most common of the summer visitants, as also in various other counties—Suffolk, Norfolk, Dorset, Devon, Northumberland, Wilts., Hants., Somerset, Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex, Kent, and Gloucestershire; in Cornwall, it is more rare as you advance westwards, but one has been killed at Scilly, as recorded by Edward Hearle Rodd, Esq., in the 'Zoologist,' page 3276: it also occurs in Wales. In Scotland it travels even to Sutherlandshire, Rosshire, Morayshire, and Aberdeenshire; and in Ireland is more or less plentiful throughout the island.

It occasionally visits Orkney in the summer, and has been observed once or twice in Sanday, but is not known to breed there.



WHINCHAT.

It has been met with by Robert Gray, Esq., of Southcroft, Govan, Glasgow, near Dunbar, in the end of December; also by Mr. H. Barlow, of Cambridge, in the mild winter of 1833, and one was found dead by the Rev. Robert Holdsworth, of Brixham, at the entrance of the River Dart, in Devonshire, during a very severe frost, on January the 20th., 1829: one has also been seen in Norfolk in the winter. In the neighbourhood of Southampton, Mr. William D. Balshaw writes in 'The Naturalist,' old series, volume ii., page 234, that some remain throughout the year, and that White of Selborne, in his Natural History of that place, Letter xxv., to the Hon. Daines Barrington, makes a similar assertion; Bewick does so also.

The Whinchat is found in a variety of situations, not only on 'the wildest waste sae black and bare' and those which are uncultivated, where the thorny shrub which has been appropriated to its name blooms and blossoms, but also among pasture fields, on whose hedges it may be seen perched and swaying itself about, mindful of the approach of danger at any point, or turning its head aside to catch a glimpse of any passing insect.

The Whinchat arrives in different parts of the country from about the middle to the end of April, and in backward seasons not until the beginning of May. It departs again at different periods in October, or the beginning of November, according to the state of the season.

It is generally easy of approach, particularly when it has a nest, shewing much anxiety for its young, and endeavouring to draw away any intruder, by flitting close before him; returning to its place by one or two more lengthened flights, when the desired object has been gained. It almost invariably perches on the topmost or outermost spray of the hedge or bush: it may be kept in confinement, and is esteemed as an article of food for the table.

It sometimes shuffles its wings contemporaneously with the motion of the tail, which it has in common with the allied species. If disturbed and followed, it drops near the ground, along which it skims, until it alights again on some other bush.

The flight of these birds is light and nimble, and the tail is sometimes fanned. In hovering over a bush the wings are rapidly fluttered.

They live on flies, beetles, and other insects, slugs, caterpillars, worms, and small mollusca; also some say on berries. The first-named are sometimes seized in the air, the bird watching for them from its station on some bush or twig, to which it returns after each successful sally.

Its song is agreeable, sweet, and melodious, though desultory, and is uttered from the top of some hedge or bush, or while hovering in the air over it. One brought up from the nest by Mr. Sweet, used to sing the whole day through, and very often at night, imitating the notes of the Whitethroat, Redstart, Willow Warbler, Missel Thrush, and Nightingale. The ordinary note is a 'chack,' or 'chat;' also when alarmed, a 'tick,' 'tick,' resembling the sound produced by striking two pebbles together, and, says Macgillivray, a 'peep, tick, tick, tick, tick;' each syllable repeated from one to six times, but rarely so often, and accompanied by a slight upraising of the wings, and a shake of the tail.

The nest is placed in the lower part of a gorse bush, a few inches above the ground, where the thorns and stalks are dying off, so that the materials of the nest assimilate in appearance to the situation in which it is placed, and it is thus the rather screened from observation. More frequently it is placed in the grass at the foot of it, and has been known in a hedge adjoining a road. Where there are no gorse bushes, it is placed in the rough grass in a pasture field, or in a meadow. It is loosely built of stalks of grass and moss, and is lined with finer portions of the former; a layer of wool has been known between the two, and occasionally some hair or leaves: it measures six inches across, and two and a half internally. It is very carefully concealed, and extremely difficult to find; the bird approaching it stealthily by a labyrinthine track.

The eggs are of a glossy bluish green colour, with some minute specks, and sometimes, though very rarely, of dull reddish brown; they are five or six in number, usually the latter, very rarely seven.

The young are hatched towards the end of May, and two broods are produced in the season, the first being abroad from the middle of June to the beginning of July, and the second in August.

Edwin Cottingham, Esq. has favoured me with a drawing of the nest and eggs.

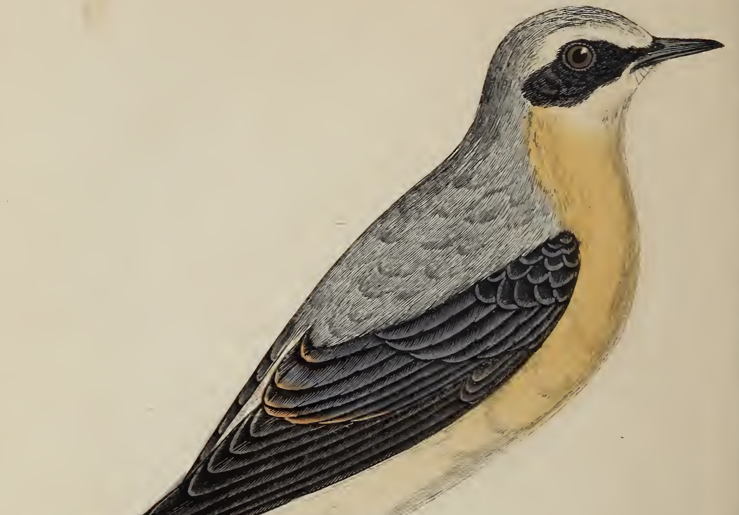
Male; weight, about four drachms and a half; length, five inches to five and a quarter; bill, polished black; a brown streak runs from its base to the eye, and over this a broad white one on each side, nearly meeting at the back; iris, dark brown; under it is a dark brown patch; bristles beset the base of the bill. Head on the sides, dark brown or brownish black; on the crown, neck on the back and nape, mottled brown, the centre of each feather being dark, and the edges pale; chin, white, which colour runs back from it on the side of the neck to the shoulder; throat and breast, fawn-colour, ending in pale buff, duller on the sides; back, mottled brown, the centre of each feather dark, the remainder paler; on the lower part it is yellowish reddish brown, streaked with blackish brown.

The wings reach to within half an inch of the end of the tail, expanding to the width of nine inches and a quarter; the first quill feather is very short—less than an inch in length, the second equal to the fifth, the third the longest, the fourth nearly as long; greater wing coverts, dusky black, those next the body pure white, as are some of the lesser wing coverts; primaries, dark brownish black, some of the outer ones white at the base; secondaries, dark brown, white at the base; tertiaries, dark brown, edged with light brown. Tail, short, white at the base, except the two middle feathers, the remainder dark brownish black, edged and tipped with pale brown; the end half of the tail is greyish black underneath; under tail coverts, white tinged with light ferruginous. Legs, toes, and claws, polished black, the latter long, slender, and very sharp.

As the season advances, the plumage shews darker, the pale edges of the feathers wearing off; the wings become of a more uniform but lighter brown, the neck in front and breast paler, and the white more pure: towards autumn these alterations are still more strong.

The female resembles the male, but her colours are less bright and distinct, and the white patches less extensive. Length, about five inches, or rather over; the streak over the eye is yellowish white. The breast has more yellow and less red in its tint; the back has the spots broader, and of a much lighter brown. The wings expand to the width of nine inches and a trifle over.

The young, in their nestling plumage, are mottled with grey and white; but when fully fledged in the autumn, resemble the female; until then the bill is greyish brown; the white streak is wanting, and the well-defined black band through the eye. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, dull yellowish brown, streaked with dark brown, the tips of many of the feathers paler. The throat has the feathers margined with dusky; breast on the lower part, yellowish brown, passing into brownish white; back, dull. Lesser wing coverts, whitish; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brownish black, broadly edged with brownish red. The tail, excepting the two middle feathers, is partially white only at the base, the rest brownish black, the feathers broadly edged with brownish red. Legs and toes, greyish brown.



WHEATEAR.

WHEATEAR.

FALLOW-CHAT. WHITE-TAIL.
STONE-CHACKER. CHACK-BIRD. CLOD-HOPPER.

Sylvia œnanthe,	Pennant. Latham.
Motacilla œnanthe,	Linnæus. Montagu. Gmelin.
" "	Willughby. Ray.
Saxicola œnanthe,	Fleming. Selby. Bechstein.

Sylvia. *Sylva*—A wood. *Œnanthe*—Some species of bird, imagined to be the Wheatear.

Most plentiful in the more temperate parts of Europe, the Wheatear is found more or less throughout the Continent, from the shores of the Mediterranean to those of the Frozen Sea. In Holland they are very abundant; they are also found in Dalmatia and Greece, Denmark, Sweden, and the Ferroe Islands, Norway, Lapland, and Iceland. In Asia they have been observed, in Asia Minor. In Arctic America one, but only one, was seen by Captain James Ross, R.N., in Felix Harbour, on the 2nd. of May, 1830, but it was killed by cold or hunger the same night.

The Wheatear is found in greater or less plenty from the Land's End to Cape Wrath. In Yorkshire I continue to notice a few of these birds near the 'Langton Wold' cricket-ground, a spot which, for the beauty of its panoramic view can hardly be equalled, certainly not exceeded, by any other cricket-ground in England; in the exquisite purity of the air to be there enjoyed it also stands pre-eminent, as well as in the excellence of the ground itself for the noble pastime. Others are to be seen along the low cliffs between Bridlington Quay and the solitary house of Auburn, the only relic of the village of that name; not, I suppose, Goldsmith's 'loveliest village of the plain,' for the encroaching ocean has long since washed away the very foundations of it, and the relics it is said, are still to be seen below the water when the latter is sufficiently clear. In one sense indeed his description suits it as a 'Deserted village,' for the signs of life are banished from it for ever, and if its consecrated church-yard still receives the dead, it is those who perish by shipwreck on the retired coast, but who will one day come forth when 'the sea shall give up the dead that are in it.'

This species is also common in the neighbourhood of Halifax in open situations, and in Gloucestershire, on Durdham Downs, near Bristol; in Lincolnshire; in Cambridgeshire, near Newmarket; in Derbyshire, near Melbourne; and in Oxfordshire; near Brighton and Rottingdean, Sussex; Burwood Common, in Surrey; Middlesex; in Devonshire and Cornwall it is less frequent, both as a resident and on its migration. But the most abundant haunts of the species, at least in the later portion of the year, are the pastoral districts, the open downs of the south of England, particularly those of Sussex and Dorset, as also the dry sand-banks to be found on some parts of the coast; such, and other barren and stony wastes, are their habitual resort, and they are seldom seen in any more cultivated places, except such are immediately adjacent to the former. Mr. Thompson has noticed them in a dock-yard at Belfast, close to the town, perching on the piles of timber.

They are spread in like manner through Wales and Scotland, where, among other localities, the Pentland Hills, Arthur's Seat, and Salisbury Craigs, near Edinburgh, are favourite resorts. In Sutherlandshire they are very abundant in the mountainous districts.

In Ireland the Wheatear is also a regular summer visitant.

In the Orkneys it occurs, as likewise very plentifully in the outer Hebrides and the Shetland Islands.

This is a migratory species, and arrives here about the middle or towards the latter end of March but, but earlier or later with the season. They seem to cross the Channel during the night, few arriving after nine o'clock in the morning, and none after twelve. They seem fatigued with their journey, and occasionally perch on the fishing-boats at sea. They do not always travel every day, and consequently, as soon as those who have first come are able to travel further inwards, it frequently happens that of the numbers to be seen in the morning none are visible in the afternoon, and it may not be for a day or two that their places are supplied by fresh visitors. The males and females both seem to arrive simultaneously, but not, at least not in general, in associated flocks. They depart again in the end of August or beginning of September, and may be seen in large numbers by the sea-shore before finally quitting the land; some continue until the first week in October. Mr. Sweet saw a pair hopping and flying briskly about on the 17th. of November, in Hyde Park. White, of Selborne, relates that Wheatears have been observed in winter in many parts of the south of England.

In Orkney they arrive generally in April; a pair were observed in the year 1847 so early as the 23rd. of March; and Mr. Macgillivray saw one near Edinburgh on the 28th. of February: Montagu had also seen them in February. In backward seasons they are later in their arrival. Thus, in Ireland, in 1837, they did not appear till the 15th. of April; and in 1840, not until the 29th. of that month. In Scotland, Sir William Jardine says that they arrive the first week in March.

They are seen for the most part singly or in pairs, are somewhat shy, and, always on the alert, on being alarmed flit away suddenly over the nearest eminence, if there be one, and so place it between them and the approaching intruder. Their careful watchfulness is shewn by a frequent turning of the head to the right and left: but, 'Tutti le volpi si trovano in pellicera.' 'No fox so cunning but he comes to the furriers at last,' and countless numbers of these birds are taken every year on the southern Downs for the table, being much esteemed as a delicacy, and sold as such in the season at the various inns. Pennant says that nearly two thousand dozen have been taken in one season in the neighbourhood of Eastbourne, in Sussex, alone. The snaring time is from the last week in July to about the third week in September, and the shepherd 'Trappers' manage each from five to seven hundred traps: one shepherd has been known to take eighty-four dozen in one day. In King Charles the Second's time, it is stated by Sir Thomas Brown, in his 'Account of the Birds found in Norfolk,' that Wheatears were taken with a Hobby and a net. When alarmed, these birds will sometimes prefer trying to hide themselves in some shelter to taking flight. If removed from their native haunt, and set at liberty, they find their way back to it.

Wheatears very seldom alight on a tree, though Mr. Macgillivray has once seen one do so, and rarely also upon a low bush or hedge, but for the most part perch on the summit of some small hillock, stone, wall, bank, or other eminence. They fly near to the surface, smoothly and rapidly, by a series of short starts, and hop along the ground also with great celerity, inclining the body on stopping, and then standing very upright. Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, mentions having seen them about the Giant's Causeway, descending from a considerable height to their nests, with motionless wings raised above the body in a singular manner.

They feed on beetles, flies, and other insects, caterpillars, grasshoppers, small snails, slugs, and worms, the former being sometimes taken on the wing, springing after them from an eminence, or even from the level plain, as well as following them on the ground; the bird frequently returning, after the manner of other fly-catching species, to its previous post on some raised clod, or grass-grown ant-hill—its watch-tower both against alarm and for prey.

Mr. Sweet, in his 'British Warblers,' says, that in confinement the Wheatear is continually in song, and sings by night as well as by day, and that their winter song is the best and most varied. Their warble is soft and pleasant, and is frequently uttered on the wing, while the bird hovers over the nest with flickering wings and expanded tail, as also when perched on some wall, mound, or other projection. It is often continued uninterruptedly for a considerable time. The ordinary note is a sharp chat.

The nest, which is commenced the middle of May, is sometimes well hid in the innermost recess of some crevice among rocks, in an old wall, stone-quarry, gravel-pit, sand-pit, or chalk-pit, and frequently in a deserted rabbit-burrow, or the hollow under some large clod, tuft, or stone. Mr. Hewitson has known one in the bank of a river, in a hole deserted by a Sand Martin. It is rudely constructed of fine dry stalks of grass or moss, feathers or wool, rabbits' fur, hair, or any other 'odds and ends' that may chance to be procurable.

The eggs, usually from four to six in number, sometimes, though very rarely, seven, are of an elegant rather elongated form, and of a uniform delicate pale blue colour, deepest at the larger end. A. J. Drake, Esq. has some varieties quite white.

The young are abroad from the middle of May to June, so that a second brood is frequently reared before the end of July.

Male; weight, about six drachms and a half; length, six inches and three quarters; bill, deep black, moderately strong, the upper one slightly notched, much compressed towards the tip, and somewhat widened at the base: the inside of the mouth and the tongue are also black; iris, brown—the eyelids black; a black streak runs to and over and widely under it from the base of the bill, expanding behind it, and over it is a band of white from the forehead, which is also white; a few bristles surround the base of the bill. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, bluish grey, each feather slightly tipped with pale brown; the sides of the neck become rufous after the autumnal moult, and the other parts tinged with brown; chin and throat, dull white, tinged with pale rufous after the autumnal moult; breast, pale yellowish or reddish brown, approaching to cream-colour; on its lower part dull white, slightly tinged with yellowish, which becomes rufous after the autumnal moult; back above, grey, with a tinge of pale reddish brown; below, white for a small part.

The wings, rather long, extending to the width of one foot and half an inch, have the first quill feather about three quarters of an inch long, the second a little shorter than the third and fourth, which are the longest, and of nearly equal length, but the third rather the longer of the two, the fifth the same length as the second; greater and lesser wing coverts, almost black, but broadly edged with rufous brown after the moult; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brownish black, all more or less margined and tipped with brownish white; they are broadly edged with rufous brown after the moult; greater and lesser under wing coverts, blackish brown, broadly edged with white. The tail has the side feathers white on their inner part for two thirds of their length, the remainder black, and all are white on their lower part; the two central feathers have less white: it is tipped narrowly with buff white after the moult; the side feathers slightly turn outwards; they are all broad and rounded at the end; upper tail coverts, white, very conspicuous in flight; under tail coverts, also white, which verges to pale rufous after the autumnal moult. Legs, long, thin, and black; toes and claws, black, the latter rather long, moderately curved, and very sharp until worn by age.

The female nearly resembles the male, but her colours are less pure; length, six inches and a half; bill, deep black; iris, brown; the streak over the eye is brownish white, and less distinct, tinged with red in the autumn, and there is a broader band of brown under it. Forehead, brown, tinged with red in the autumn; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, light reddish brown, intermixed with grey; chin, throat, and breast above, light reddish brown, the remainder pale greyish brown, and cream-colour in the autumn; back above, light reddish brown, intermixed with grey; below, dull white.

The wings extend to the width of eleven inches and a quarter; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, blackish brown, edged with dull reddish brown; greater and lesser under wing coverts, blackish brown, broadly edged with brownish white. Tail, dark blackish brown, the inner part of the feathers white at the base in a graduated manner, excepting the two middle ones, of which the shaft only is white at the base, and a small portion of the downy part of these feathers; upper tail coverts, dull white. Legs, toes, and claws, brownish black.

The young, when nearly fledged, have the streak over the eye rufous, and the line through it is imperfect; the dark band on the side of the head is wanting. Head, crown, and neck on the back, light greyish brown, the central part of each feather on the head paler; back, in the male, on the lower part, white, but most of the feathers tipped with brown in the females. Greater wing coverts, deep brown, broadly margined and tipped with brownish red; lesser wing coverts, dusky, with greyish yellow margins. Tail, deep brown, the feathers white at the base, and broadly margined and tipped with brownish red.

After the first autumnal moult the young birds assume the adult plumage, but the colours are more tinged with brown.

These birds vary considerably in size, and also, according to age, in colour; the grey of the back and the white of the breast being more pure, and the black and brown being deeper in old birds; the wearing of the edges of the feathers in the summer also produces a change.

Both young and old birds moult before leaving the country.

J. H. Gurney, Esq., of Easton, near Norwich, records in the 'Zoologist,' page 2923, a curious variety of this bird killed at Thetford, in July, 1850. It was a female. The wings were white, excepting a few feathers on the shoulder, and two or three adjoining the primaries on the centre of each wing, which were of a pale buff. The rest of the plumage was the same as usual, but all lighter in colour.

Another singular variety of this bird was shot at Spetchley, near Worcester, in 1846, by R. Berkeley, Esq., of that place. 'The black streak over the eyes, cheeks, and ears, was gone, but there is a slight trace of the white line; the flight feathers and wing coverts are white, edged with a band of buff; the upper tail coverts and part of the tail is white, as in ordinary birds of this species, but all the rest of the plumage in this specimen is a kind of buff.'

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER.

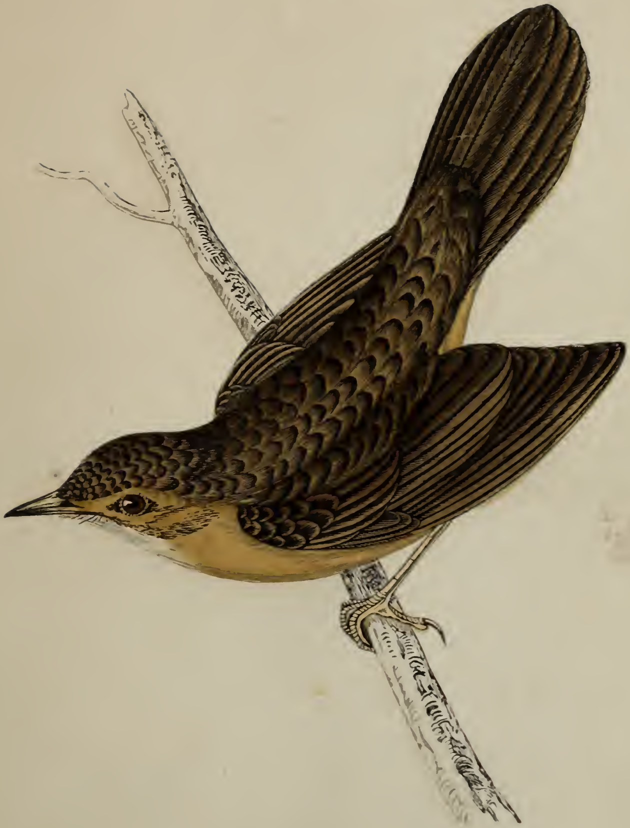
CRICKET BIRD.

Sylvia locustella,	PENNANT. MONTAGU. BEWICK.
Curruca locustella,	FLEMING.
Salicaria locustella,	SELBY.
Locustella avicula,	GOULD. RAY.

Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Locustella*—A diminutive of *Locusta,* a Locust.

ON the European continent this species is found in the southern and central parts—Italy, France, Germany, Holland, and Switzerland, as also in Sweden and Denmark, and the south of Russia and Siberia. In Holland it is said to be rare.

In Yorkshire the Grasshopper Warbler is abundant in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield, as Peter Inchbald, Esq., of Storthes Hall, informs me; as also in several other parts, and has been met with near Askern, and at Scarborough, in the garden of Dr. Murray, and in Raincliff Wood near that town, as communicated to the 'Naturalist,' old series, by Mr. Patrick Hawkridge, in volume ii., p. 335. One was shot near Barnsley, by Dr. Farrar; at Hebden Bridge it is met with rarely; it is frequent about Sheffield, but rather rare near Leeds. Near Halifax a few pairs breed every summer, and others in several localities near Doncaster, as at Wadsworth, Hutmoor, and Rossington; a few also near Bridlington; and at Buttercrambe Wood, and at Langwith. It is not uncommon in the county of Rutland, in the neighbourhood of Uppingham, so R. W. Hawkins, Esq., of Rugeley, and also J. R. Little, Esq., of St. John's College, Cambridge, have written me word; and the latter gentleman adds that it has been found very frequently of late years in Cambridgeshire. In Sussex it has been noticed near Eastbourne; in Surrey, near Tooting; and in Middlesex, a few miles from London; also in Hampshire,



GRASSHOPPER WARBLER.

Dorsetshire, near Kingsbridge, in Devonshire; Gloucestershire, Cornwall, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cumberland, Northumberland, and Durham; in Wiltshire on Malmesbury Common, Derbyshire, Oxfordshire, and also in Wales.

In Scotland it has been seen at Musselburgh, near Edinburgh; in Ayrshire, and in Galloway, at New Abbey.

In Ireland also it is a regular summer visitant to suitable localities from south to north. The neighbourhood of Belfast, in the counties of Down and Antrim, Carrickfergus, Killaloe, in the County Clare, Wexford, Clonmel, and Youghal, are mentioned by the late William Thompson, Esq. among others.

Resorting to the close shelter of hedges, underwood, sedgy places, and thickets, this bird is for the most part out of sight, and is chiefly visible in the morning.

It is another of our migratory species, arriving in this country about the middle of April, and leaving us again in September. One has been picked up in August, cast up on the shore by the waves. It does not arrive in Scotland and the northern parts of the kingdom until the beginning of May.

'In its habits,' says Mr. Yarrell, 'it is shy, vigilant, and restless, secreting itself in a hedge, and creeping along it for many yards in succession, more like a mouse than a bird; seldom to be seen far from a thicket, a patch of furze, or covert of some sort, and returning to it again on the least alarm. During the breeding-season, when bushes and shrubs are clothed with leaves, it is difficult to obtain a sight of this bird; yet, when near its haunt, its note rings on the ear constantly, and, like that of other aquatic Warblers, may be heard about sunset particularly, and sometimes even during the night.' The bird is occasionally to be seen for a moment or two on the lower branches of some tree or shrub in its haunt, but is soon hid again from view. It has been observed to run out from its hiding-place along and to the extremity of some open branch, deliver its song, and then return to its retreat. The female, confined with her brood, conceals herself even more assiduously than the male.

On the ground it runs very fast in a graceful manner, often jerking the tail and tossing up the head; and also is said to hop; it climbs about reeds with great dexterity and nimbleness.

Its food is composed of flies, gnats, beetles, and other insects, grasshoppers, small snails, and slugs.

Its stridulous note, from whence its name, strikingly resembles the chirruping sound of the large green grasshopper, or rather locust, to be heard so loud and shrill in the southern counties in the fine summer evenings. It is often continued, particularly in the earlier portion of the year, for two or three minutes without cessation, and may be heard at a considerable distance. Farther on in the season it is most heard at night, but is not continued in general later than July or August. The note is faint at its first commencement, but it 'vires acquirit eundo,' and gradually becomes louder and louder, till it is audible at a considerable distance. It is suspended on the slightest alarm, and the bird vanishes into its cover, from whence, when the danger has passed, it emerges again to utter its chirping cry from another bush. At times they utter it in the air, hovering over the bush which contains their nest. It has been suggested that the object of this note may be to decoy the large grasshoppers, who may mistake it for the call of their own species. In the earlier part of the day it sometimes sings perched on the top of a twig, and shivering its wings. 'Nothing,' adds Gilbert White, 'can be more amusing than the whisper of this little bird, which seems to be close by, though at a hundred yards distance, and when close to your ear is scarce any louder than when a great way off.' This ventriloquistic power is certainly very remarkable, but in many cases the sound has, in all probability, proceeded from a Grasshopper Warbler of the insect species.

The nest, of a cup shape, is formed in a rather firm manner of grass, with sometimes a little moss, lined with finer portions of the same. It is difficult to find, owing to the careful habits of the bird, and is placed on the ground, and has been met with at the foot of a small bush by the road side; it is completely hidden in the middle of some large tuft, through which there is no entrance but such as the bird threads for herself, creeping along like a mouse to and into it.

The eggs are from five or six to seven in number, of a pale reddish white colour, freckled all over with specks of darker red; they seldom vary much.

The young soon quit the nest on being disturbed, trusting by instinct to their habitual powers of concealment.

Male; weight, about three drachms and a quarter; length, five inches and nearly three quarters; bill, dusky brown, the base of the under mandible paler than the other parts, inclining to yellow; it is thin, and much compressed from the middle to the tip, the upper one notched: the corners of the mouth are reddish yellow; iris, brown. Head on the crown, neck on the back, and nape, olive brown, the centres of the feathers darker, giving it a spotted appearance; chin, yellowish white; throat and breast, very pale yellowish brown, with an olive tint on the sides, spotted with darker brown; back, olive brown, mottled by the edges of the feathers being lighter than the centre: the upper part of it is the darkest.

The wings, which are very short, extending to the width of seven inches and a half, and reaching only a very little beyond the base of the tail, have the first feather very short, the second longer than the fifth, but shorter than the fourth, the third the longest; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dark dusky brown, edged with reddish brown; underneath, their shafts are white and glossy; greater and lesser under wing coverts, light yellowish grey. The tail, which is long and of the 'cuneiform character,' extending an inch and a half beyond the wings, is brown marked in some lights with numerous obscure transverse bands: the feathers are edged with reddish brown, and are very soft and broad; under tail coverts, pale brown, streaked along the centre of each feather with darker brown. Legs, strong, and as the toes and claws, pale brownish yellow, lighter in autumn, the latter thin and narrow, but hooked and strong, their tips dusky.

With the advance of summer, owing to the abrasion of the feathers, the upper parts of the plumage become of a greyish brown colour, and of the lower parts paler.

The female resembles the male, but the dusky lines on the fore part of the neck are wanting. Breast, uniform pale yellowish brown colour.

Young; upper bill, light brown; the lower, dull yellow. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, light yellowish brown, spotted with dusky; throat, pale brownish yellow; breast, brownish yellow, tinged on the sides with brown; back, light yellowish brown, spotted with dusky. Primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dusky; edged with light yellowish brown; greater and lesser under wing coverts, yellowish grey. Tail, dusky, the feathers edged with light yellowish brown; under tail coverts, yellowish grey, with a faint dusky streak along the middle. Legs and toes, greyish yellow.

SAVI'S WARBLER.

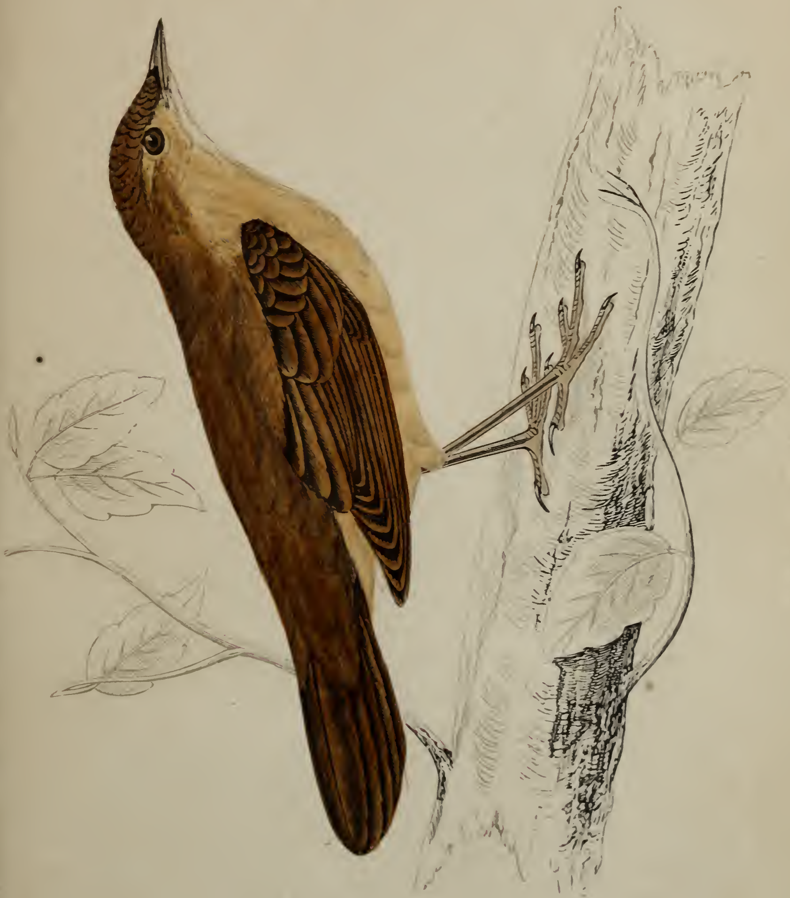
Sylvia luscinoides, GOULD.
Salicaria luscinoides, YARRELL.

Sylvia. *Sylva*—A wood.
Luscinoides. *Luscinia*—A Nightingale. *Eidos*—The form, figure, or likeness of any thing.

THIS species, named after Professor Savi, who first noticed it, belongs to the south of Europe, occurring in Italy and France. It also is found in Africa, in Egypt.

One of these birds was procured many years ago, by the Rev. James Brown, in the marshes near Norwich, and was duly recorded by the Rev. R. Sheppard and the Rev. W. Whitear, in their 'Catalogue of the Norfolk and Suffolk Birds, with remarks,' and the account published in the 'Transactions of the Linnæan Society,' 1825. Others were procured in Cambridgeshire, in the Fens, in the spring of 1840, by Mr. J. Baker, a notice of which was published in the 'Annals of Natural History,' volume vi., page 155; and a pair subsequently by Mr. Joseph Clarke, of Saffron Walden. I am, however, informed by Mr. Bird, that, according to Mr. Frederic Bond, who has also given me the same account himself, these Warblers are quite common in Cambridgeshire fens, where they breed regularly every year, as also in Huntingdonshire; the latter gentleman has also procured the nests from Backsbite, in the parish of Milton, near Cambridge—the 'Alma Mater' of more than one race. Wicken Fen, near Ely, is another locality, as S. R. Little, Esq., of St. John's College, Cambridge, writes me word. A pair were also procured, as stated in the 'Account of the Birds found in Norfolk, by William Richard Fisher, and John Henry Gurney, Esqrs.,' at South Walsham, in the summer of 1843.

This species is of shy habits, rapidly descending, on alarm, into the reeds.



SAVI'S WARBLER.

The note is described as somewhat resembling the sound made by a spinning-wheel: it is generally uttered from the top of some reed on which the bird perches.

The nest, which is placed on the ground, is formed of the leaves of the reed, wound round and interlaced, but without any other lining.

The eggs are of a whitish colour, minutely speckled nearly all over with pale red and light grey, in some the red, and in others the grey predominating.

Male; length, five inches and a half; bill, brown; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, reddish brown; chin and throat, almost white; breast, pale reddish brown. Tail, reddish brown, indistinctly barred with darker narrow bands; legs, toes, and claws, pale brown.

SEDGE WARBLER.

SEDGE BIRD. SEDGE WREN. REED FAUVETTE.

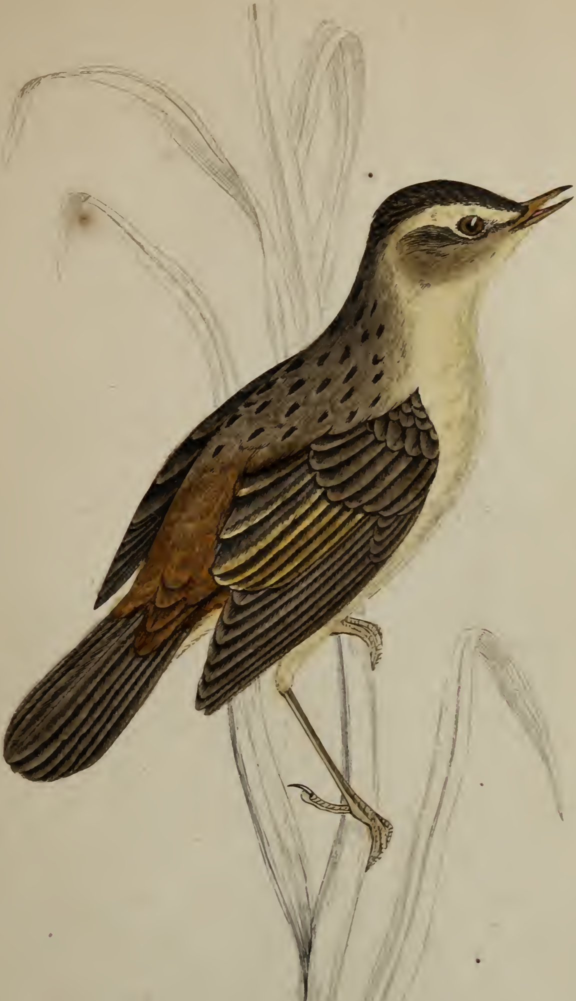
Sylvia salicaria,	LATHAM.
" *phragmitis,*	TEMMINCK.
Salicaria phragmitis,	SELBY.
Calamoherpe phragmitis,	MACGILLIVRAY.

Sylvia. *Sylva*—A wood. *Salicaria*—Of or pertaining to willows. *Salix*—A willow.

THE Sedge Bird is generally spread over Europe, its range extending even to the Arctic Circle; in the middle parts of the continent, it is however the most numerous. In Holland it is very abundant; and is found also in France and Germany, Norway, Russia, and Siberia, Italy and Sweden. In Asia, it has been noticed by my friend Mr. Hugh Edwin Strickland, in Asia Minor.

Throughout England it is more or less abundant, according to the nature of the locality. In Yorkshire this bird is very common in the Driffield neighbourhood, and also near Thirsk, Doncaster, Barnsley, Sheffield, Hobmoor, York, Swillington, and Brotherton, in fact in most parts; near Halifax and Huddersfield it is less numerous. It is plentiful also in Essex Suffolk, Hampshire, Dorsetshire, Devonshire, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Northumberland, and Lancashire. In Cornwall it seems to be not uncommon.

In Scotland it is nowhere abundant, but is most met with in the southern and middle divisions. In Sutherlandshire it is constantly to be heard at night, about reedy lochs and swamps, and is to be met with even to the northernmost extremity. The Sedge Warbler, as its name imports, is for the most part found in the neighbourhood of water, but such is not exclusively the case, for it often resorts to thick hedges, lanes, and other cover at some distance from it.



SEDGE WARBLER.

It migrates to us the latter part of April, or sometimes later with the season, seldom arriving in Scotland before the beginning of May. The males are believed to arrive before the females. They come in small parties of from two to five or six each. They are late in leaving, some being seen till the middle of October, even in the north of England: one has been observed near High Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire, in winter.

This is another species of hidling, though not exactly of shy habits, and is most frequently seen if disturbed, for otherwise it keeps to its haunt in the middle of the thick hedge, tall sedge, reeds, or other aquatic plants among which it harbours. This very day on which I am writing, I watched one for some time playing at hide and seek with me, in some large hawthorn bushes which covered the steep bank of a stream, overhanging it almost down to the water's edge; beyond all doubt the nest was there. Now it would fly a few yards off; now, if thinking itself unobserved, slyly return to its place; now sing lustily from some hidden covert, and on a sudden emerge and shew itself; then again descend to the recesses of the thick brake, and so quickly reappear at a little distance, that it would almost seem as if it had flown straight without hindrance through the tangled underwood; once more it would set up its ringing note, a watchman springing his rattle to alarm his household, for such in its small way it closely resembles, and finally disappear from view and from hearing together, unless again disturbed. The hen bird sits close on her nest, and you may often pass close by without her leaving it. If alarmed for her young she evinces great anxiety, moving in and out of the neighbouring cover. These birds are able to be kept in confinement.

They feed on insects of various kinds, some of which are captured on the wing, and others snatched from the surface of the water; also on worms and small slugs.

The note, which is heard from the midst of 'the bush,' or when perched on the top of a small branch or spray, as also while flying for some short distance to the next cover, is very powerful for so small a throat, and they sing sometimes in a most violent chiding sort of manner, as if in defiance of approach. The common note is a small shrill cheep, but their song, though somewhat of a chatter, is very lively, and not without a mellow modulation. It is heard at night even as late as twelve o'clock on the fine still summer evenings, with little intermission, and even still on 'till morning comes again.' Any sudden alarm brings forth its rattle with renewed vigour. It is correctly said by some to imitate the notes of other birds; I have heard it myself closely take off the chirping of the Sparrow. Mr. James R. Garrett, says Mr. Thompson, has known it repeat the cricket-like note of the Grasshopper Warbler, and suddenly burst out into the song of the Swallow or some other bird. So also Mr. Stewart narrates, as quoted in the same work, that he has heard it mimic the clear warble of the Thrush, and the hoarse twitter of the Sparrow; to which Mr. Selby adds the notes of the Lark and the Linnet.

N. Rowe, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, has taken the nest in a seringa tree. It is usually placed at about two, and never at a greater height than three or four, feet from the ground, on a stump of a willow or alder tree, but generally among the tall grass or flags that grow along the side of the river or pool. G. B. Clarke, Esq., of Woburn, has been kind enough to forward me specimens of the nest and eggs. The nest is made of stalks of grass, and other smaller plants, lined with finer parts of the same and hair: it is rather large, and but loosely put together. Selby says that moss is sometimes used. The young leave the nest very soon.

The eggs, four, or generally five, Sir William Jardine says six or seven, in number, are of a pale yellowish brown colour, marked with light brown and dull grey. They are usually closely freckled all over. Mr. Heysham mentions a nest which contained three quite white. Sometimes they are uniform dull yellow: they are laid early in May.

Male; weight, about three drachms; length, about four inches and a third; the upper bill, broad at the base, is brownish black, the lower pale reddish brown, the end dusky, a pale brown streak runs from it to the eye, and a short way down the side of the neck; iris, brown; over it is a broad yellowish white band, proceeding from the base of the bill. Head on the crown, brownish black, the edges of the feathers streaked with light brown, in the latter part of the summer it becomes nearly uniform brownish black; neck on the sides, yellowish brown, on the back and nape, reddish brown, tinged with grey, the middle of each feather being dark brown; chin and throat, nearly white; breast, brownish white, strongly tinged with yellowish brown on the sides; back above, reddish brown, tinged with grey, the middle of each feather being dark brown, and the lower part light reddish yellow brown, the centres of the feathers brown.

The wings are rather short, expanding to the width of seven inches and nearly three quarters; the first feather is very short, the third the longest, the second a little shorter still. Greater and lesser wing coverts, pale dusky reddish brown, edged with pale greyish brown; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dark dusky brown, the latter edged with pale greyish brown. The tail, which extends three quarters of an inch beyond the closed wings, and is rather long, straight, and slightly rounded, is dusky brown, the feathers edged with pale greyish brown, underneath it is dusky brown; upper tail coverts, reddish brown, darker than the back; under tail coverts, yellowish brown; legs, pale yellowish grey; toes, a little darker; claws, brown, the hinder one rather short and hooked—all somewhat curved and sharp.

The female resembles the male, but is slightly larger. The stripe over the eye is less distinct. The crown is more tinged with brown; the back is of a paler tint, and less bright on the lower part. Upper tail coverts, less rufous than in the male; under tail coverts, mixed with dusky brown.

The young when fully fledged have the bill greyish brown above, and pale reddish brown beneath; head and crown, reddish brown, spotted with brownish black; neck on the back and nape, reddish brown; chin, throat, and breast, dull brownish white. Back on the upper part, reddish brown, spotted with brown; toes, pale reddish brown.

A very curious variety of this species is recorded by W. F. W. Bird, Esq., in the 'Zoologist,' page 3632, as having been killed in Sussex, in July, 1852:—'It was a bird of this year, but full grown, and of a uniform light canary colour all over, except that on the top of the head there were a few spots or small streaks of pale olive.'

REED WARBLER.

NIGHT WARBLER. REED WREN.

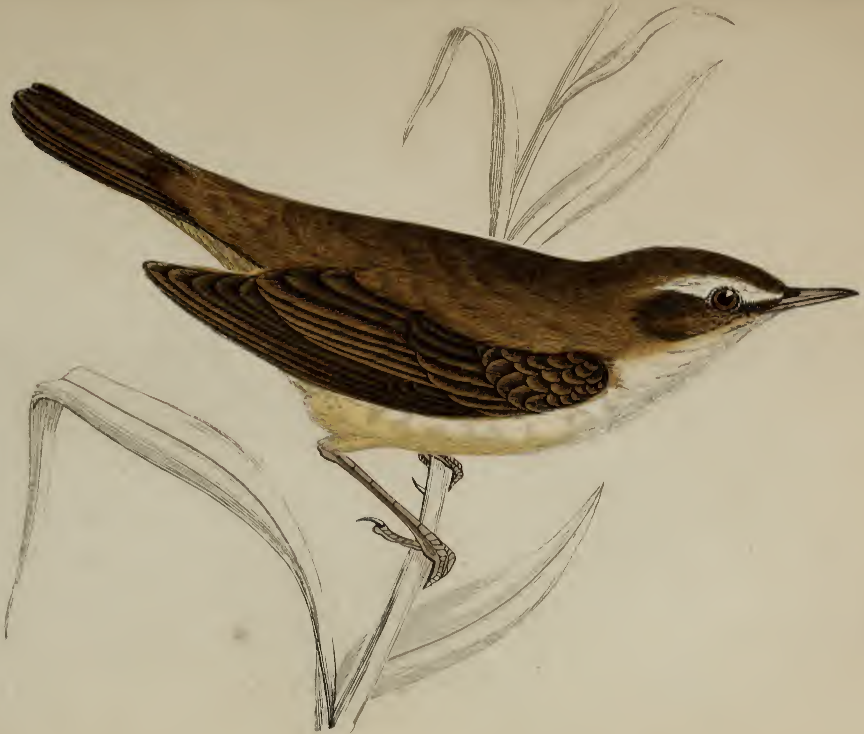
Sylvia arundinacea,	PENNANT. BEWICK.
Motacilla arundinacea,	MONTAGU.
Curruca arundinacea,	FLEMING.
Salicaria arundinacea,	SELBY. GOULD.
Passer arundinacea minor,	RAY.

Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Arundinacea*—Of, or appertaining to reeds.
Arundo—A reed.

THE Reed Warbler is abundant in Holland, Italy, Germany, and France, and is found in other temperate parts of Europe, but is more rare in the south.

The Rev. John Lightfoot was the first to notice this bird as a British one, and his acconnt of it, communicated to Sir Joseph Banks, was read before the Royal Society, and printed in their Transactions for the year 1785. Now, however, it is plentifully known, though somewhat locally in many parts. In Yorkshire it is tolerably common in some districts; among others, near Thirsk and Huddersfield, and has been met with near Ripon. It builds in the gardens of Worcester College, Oxford, as James Dalton, Esq. has informed me. In the counties of Essex, near Epping; in Surrey, on the Abbey River; and in Kent, about Romney Marsh and Sandwich. In Suffolk, near Sudbury; Staffordshire, near Tutbury; in Norfolk, near Yarmouth; in Nottinghamshire; Staffordshire, by the Trent; Sussex, near Arundel; Northamptonshire; Derbyshire, near Melbourne, and other parts; Oxfordshire, and near London. In Devonshire it is considered rare; also in Cornwall.

In Ireland Mr. Templeton saw one near Belfast; and Robert J. Montgomery, Esq., of The Manor House, Raheny, near Dublin, shot one there on the 21st. of December, 1843.



REED WARBLER.

Migratory in its habits, it arrives here generally the end of April or the beginning of the month of May, and leaves us again about the commencement of September.

I have been favoured by J. G. Bonney, Esq., of Rugeley, Staffordshire, with a full account of the habits of this bird. Wherever it does occur it is found in that part of England in great abundance. It is rather shy, and loves to ensconce itself among reeds, where, eschewing the advice so often inculcated in early life on another species, it is for the most part heard but not seen. It is almost continually on the move, running rapidly up and down the tall stems, and hopping about from one to another with great agility. It frequents places where such trees and plants as willows, reeds, and rushes abound.

It may be kept in confinement, and in that state has been heard by Mr. Sweet to sing occasionally all the winter. Mr. Meyer has known it build close to the town of Chertsey.

Its food consists of various water insects and their larvæ, worms, slugs, and the smaller dragon-flies: the winged kinds are sometimes hovered for and taken on the surface of the water, or carefully searched after among the stems and branches of the willows and aquatic plants in its resorts.

Its ordinary note is rapidly hurried, harsh, loud, garrulous, and unmusical, uttered almost incessantly when its nest is supposed to be in any danger—a mere 'kurrrrrrr.' It has been likened by Mr. Bonney to the words 'chree, que, treet,' repeated without any order. The song of the one just now mentioned is described as very variable, consisting of a great number of notes, and sung with many changes of voice, so diversified as to resemble the song of several different birds. It appears to be heard at night, and is chiefly uttered from the midst of the dense foliage—the 'locus in quo' the bird secretes itself.

The nest is a very artistical piece of work, and is generally placed between three, four, or five stems of the common reed that grow near to one another, at a height commonly of about three feet above the water, but one has been known as much as nine feet from the ground. To these the self-taught architect fastens the cordage that supports her tent, twining and interlacing it, that is, part of the materials of which it is composed, round and round them at intervals, until the whole is firmly fixed, not so firmly however but that the reeds may be easily slipped out without injuring the structure. It is formed of dried grass, long stalks, dry leaves, lichens, and wool, as also at times some moss, and is lined with the blossom of the reed. It generally consists of two parts, a loose foundation of the first-named materials, and the actual nest, which is composed almost exclusively of the last-named. This upper part can sometimes be detached from the lower, as if from a socket, the whole being narrow and deep to secure the eggs when the reeds are swayed down, so that the frail fabric, the bird all the while sitting in it, is often brought close to the very water's edge. The depth outside is from about three to five inches, and the inside about three, by about three in width at the top and two at the bottom. The nest, however, is not invariably placed among reeds; it is at times found in a blackthorn, whitethorn, willow, or among the clustering branches of an osier bed. Mr. Sweet met with one in the low part of a poplar tree, and Mr. Bolton another in a hazel bush. It is said that the nests of birds of the first and second years' age are not so neatly finished as those whose builders have had more experience. When destroyed sometimes by floods, even two or three times, these birds have been known by Mr. Briggs to build a fourth. James Dalton, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, has taken one suspended in a box tree, near the piece of water which is there so great an ornament. N. Rowe Esq., of the same College, has found it in a lilac tree. G. B. Clarke, Esq., of Woburn, has also forwarded to me specimens of the nest and eggs of the present species, as have likewise J. G. Bonney, Esq., and Mr. Dalton.

The eggs, usually four, or sometimes five or six in number, are of a dull greenish white colour, spotted and freckled with darker greyish green and light brown. In some instances the spots are almost black, in others inclining to a brownish green; occasionally the egg is marked with one or two little black lines at the broad end. The arrangement of the spots is endless—some varieties are equally marked all over; in some the spots are in a ring round the broad end; in others the base is covered; some are but slightly marked; others are completely covered over; one rare variety has been seen almost white, faintly mottled with pale grey blots; some quite white have been known. They are frequently not laid until after the beginning of June.

The young are hatched in July, and are said to quit the nest soon, being able, before acquiring the art of flying, to make their way about the stalks of the reeds with their parents.

Male; weight, nearly three drachms; length, five inches and a half; bill, broad at the base, pale brown, the under mandible inclining to yellowish white, brown towards the end—an indistinct dusky streak runs from its base to the eye and behind it, and a pale yellowish brown streak over it; iris, pale orange brown; eyelids, pale yellowish white; there are two or three strong bristles on each side of the bill. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, uniform rather pale brown with a tinge of chesnut; chin and throat, white, of a silvery cast in old birds. Breast, pale greyish yellow, darkest on the sides; back, pale reddish brown.

The wings extend to within an inch and a half of the end of the tail, the quills are nineteen in number, the first feather is about a quarter the length of the second, the second and fourth nearly equal; primaries, secondaries, and and tertaries, dark dusky chesnut brown, bordered with olive brown. Tail, rather long, and a good deal rounded at the end, the outside feather being a quarter of an inch shorter than the middle one; the two middle feathers are the longest, and a little pointed; it is dark dusky brown, bordered with olive brown; under tail coverts, pale buff. Legs and toes, pale greyish or yellowish brown, the claws a little darker, the hind one strong, long, and hooked; the soles yellowish.

The female is scarcely distinguishable from the male, but is rather smaller. Length, about five inches.

The young of the year are darker coloured than their parents, and more mottled. The white streak over the eye is very faint until after the moult.

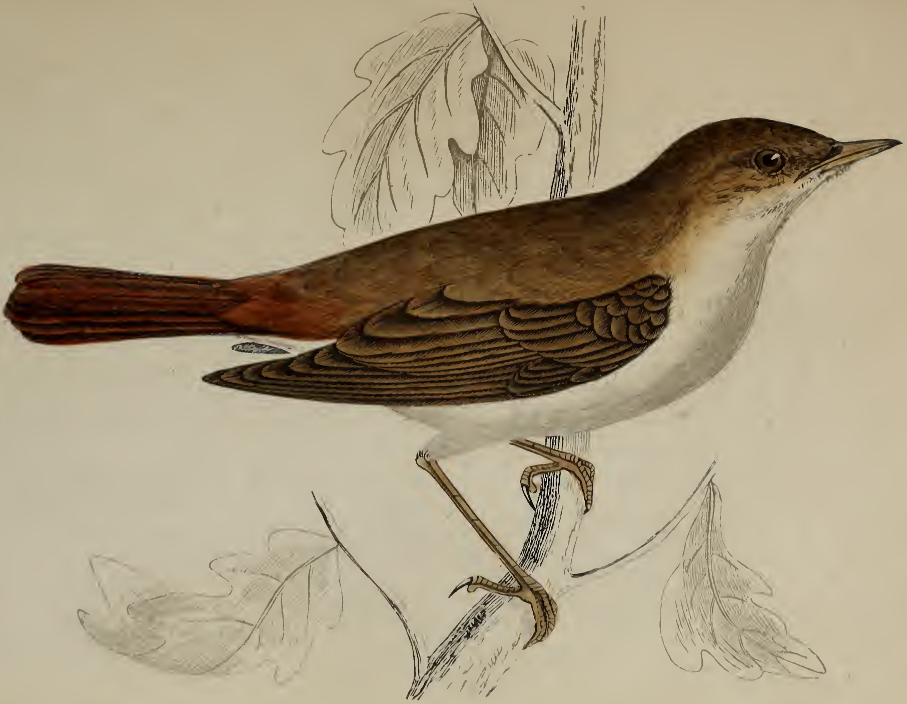
NIGHTINGALE.

Sylvia luscinia,	PENNANT. TEMMINCK.
Motacilla luscinia,	MONTAGU. BEWICK.
Curruca luscinia,	FLEMING.
Philomela luscinia,	SELBY. GOULD.

Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Luscinia*—A Nightingale.

THE Nightingale is found in Europe, in Russia even and the more temperate parts of Siberia, Sweden, Holland, Denmark, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, and the islands of Greece. It is known also in Asia—in Asia Minor and Syria; and in Africa, in Egypt along the Nile, and in other northern districts.

In Yorkshire I have known them in great plenty in the neighbourhood of Doncaster, but the bird-catchers make sad havoc among them. They have also been known near York, and at Skelton, about five miles north of the ancient city; also in woods near Barnsley, near Beverley, and near Leeds; in a wood a mile from Shipley, near Bradford; at Walton, near Wakefield; Braham Park, near Wetherby; near Huddersfield, at Cinderfield Dyke Wood in Bradley; and in the wood at Cawood on the Ouse below York. I am also persuaded that I heard it, 'ni fallor,' some few years ago, about a mile south of Malton, seventeen miles north-east of York, by the road-side, as I was walking home one moonlight night. It is occasionally heard near Sheffield. It is well known in Sussex, Hampshire, and Dorsetshire; some parts of Gloucestershire; in Devonshire, near Teignmouth, Honiton, Exeter, and the eastern parts of the county, once near Kingsbridge, at Exmouth, and Barnstaple; in some parts of Somersetshire; Doveridge, in Derbyshire; Cumberland, as far north as Carlisle; Essex; Richmond Park, Surrey; Suffolk; Norfolk, though less numerous than in some counties, at Gunton, Burgh, and elsewhere; Lincolnshire, in some situations; and in the Park of Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire, it is very



NIGHTINGALE.

abundant. It has also frequented the Regent's Park, Hyde Park, and Kensington Gardens, near London.

In Scotland a pair are said by Mr. Robert D. Duncan to have bred in Calder Wood, in West Lothian, in the year 1826.

In Ireland it has hitherto been altogether unknown.

Woods, groves, plantations, and copses are its favourite resort, but it is also found in gardens, even in the neighbourhood of London, and also among thick hedges in shady and sheltered situations.

Insects of various sorts, spiders, and earwigs furnish them with food. The young are fed principally with caterpillars.

The Nightingale favours us with its company about the middle or end of April, sometimes it is said, not until May, the males arriving about a week or ten days before the females. It has been known to arrive on the Suffolk coast as early as the 7th. of that month. It departs again in August or September. It would appear that its migration is made in an almost due south and north direction, few being found in Devonshire, and none in Cornwall, Wales, or Ireland, nor any, it is said, in Brittany, or in the Channel Islands. Many have been introduced into the western parts, and others into Scotland by Sir John Sinclair, but they have never returned the following year—the birth-place possesses an overpowering attraction for some, but the Nightingale takes a still higher ground, and will pine in any place but that in which it ought to have been born. They seem to travel by night, and to arrive singly, one by one. The older birds too are thought to arrive before the younger ones.

It its habits it is not shy, and, as is too well known, may be kept in confinement: unfortunately they are easily captured. Bechstein has known one which thus lived for twenty-five years. Those taken on their first arrival are said to do better than those taken afterwards—slavery is somewhat the same in birds as in the human species. The right-minded man and the right-minded ornithologist will reprobate both. These birds return to their native haunt, and each one appears to exercise propietorship over its own more peculiar domain. In one instance, related by Mr. J. D. Salmon, of Thetford, in the 'Naturalist,' old series, volume ii, page 52, they have been known to breed in confinement, namely, at Norwich, in the year 1833. The female laid five eggs, which were all hatched; and though the male died, the female did not relax her cares, but successfully reared three young.

The late Bishop Stanley relates the following account of one which was reared from the nest in the spring of 1835: —'It soon became tame, and was kept in a cage till May, 1837, singing always in the winter from Christmas till April, and shewing no symptoms of impatience at the usual period of migration; it was silent the rest of the year. Last May it was permitted to go out of its cage, which was hung up, open, at the door of the offices. At first it returned regularly in the evening to its cage, and was taken in, and released again the next morning. As the season advanced, it sometimes stayed out all night in the shrubberies and pleasure-grounds, but if called by any of the servants, whose voice it knew, would return and feed out of their hand. For a a day or two, towards the close of summer, it seemed rather uneasy, but this soon wore off. As the evenings got cool, in the autumn, it returned to its cage before nightfall, and was taken as usual into the house; as the season still further advanced, it was to be permanently housed, and was expected to sing again at Christmas.'

He also mentions a remarkable instance of their removing their eggs, under peculiar circumstances, as communicated to the French Academy of Sciences by M. Merveaux.—A pair of these birds had built their nest in his garden in the lower part of a hedge, containing four eggs, when some water in the neighbourhood rose with such impetuosity as to inundate the garden. He watched them with some anxiety, and one day when the water had reached to within six paces of the nest, he only perceived two eggs. He at first thought that the nest had been abandoned; but coming to it very soon after, he only saw one, and this time he waited to see the result, and was much astonished to see the last egg disappear with the birds, who, flying cautiously, but rapidly, carried it to a new nest, at the highest part of the hedge, where he saw all the four eggs deposited in safety, and where they were afterwards hatched.

Its flight is swift, light, smooth, and even, though not extended far. On the ground it stands very erect. When alighting on a branch the wings are slightly shaken or quivered.

It takes its prey just in the same way that the Thrush does, flying to the ground, hopping quickly along in search of any, then suddenly seizing it, and after a sidelong glance returning to its post, often the very spot from which it had descended. It also searches for insects along the branches and under leaves. It is fond of the eggs of ants, and of the larvæ of wasps, hornets, and bees. The young are said to be fed with caterpillars.

It is a fancy of Viellot, and the idea, though fanciful, is a pretty one, that the Nightingale loves a neighbourhood where there is an echo, as if aware of and admiring its own music. Certainly the echo of such sounds, for most beautiful they are, are well worth listening to, and the softened strain may be mistaken by the enamoured bird for the answering note of his partner, and so may have a heightened enchantment to his ear.

The name of Nightingale is derived, as Pennant remarks, from the word night, and the Saxon word galan—to sing; and 'oft in the stilly night' when you are far away from every wordly association, and there is nothing but the voice of the Nightingale to break the 'charmed air' and the repose in which all nature is hushed, your soul may well be raised to happy and holy contemplation, and you will be able to enter into the spirit of the Old Hundredth Psalm, and 'Praise GOD from whom all blessings flow.'

When the young are hatched the song ceases in great measure, though it is in fact continued in some degree to within a few days of their departure. They do not sing on their very first arrival; it is not till the females have come that the serenade begins; then 'Buona notte, Buona notte amato bene,' is the nightly strain for about a fortnight, until the arrival of a family busy it too much with sublunary cares. If the female be accidentally destroyed, the male then resumes his song until he finds another partner, which, curious to say, as in the case of other species, he generally meets with, but where or how is 'passing strange.' A warning note is excited by the approach of danger, or a snapping of the bill uttered against it, and a short 'tack,' heard also at other times. The Nightingale begins its morning song from half-past three to four o'clock. Sometimes, indeed, especially if the moon be shining, it sings throughout the night, and its song, attended however by its peculiar objurgatory note, instead of being checked, is only excited the more by any casual disturbance. The sound of music or other noise will arouse their attention, and at times their rivalry. An anecdote is on record of one, which entered into competition with the instrument of a performer, and fell at his feet exhausted with the struggle to outvie him. Pliny, too, says 'They emulate one another, and the contention is plainly an animated one. The conquered often ends its life, its spirit failing sooner than its song.' It has been known to imitate the human voice.

It is the opinion of Mr. Charles Muskett, of Norwich, as expressed in a letter to me, that the older the bird, the more perfect the song. The voice of the Nightingale may be heard, it is said, when the air is calm, to fill a space of a mile in diameter. Meyer says that a young one, taken from the nest, has been known to sing on the seventh day after its removal, and as it was conjectured to be about nine days old when taken, its musical career was commenced on the sixteenth day of its existence. They sing by day as well as by night. I have heard them on every side of me in Edlington Wood, near Doncaster, a place where they abound. Mr. Newman relates in the 'Magazine of Natural History,' volume v, page 654, that on the 12th. of December, either in 1823 or 1824, he heard the Nightingale singing clearly and distinctly, although not very loudly, at Godalming, in Surrey. He also mentions that he has seen it in that neighbourhood in the month of October, and once in November. The poet Cowper has some stanzas addressed 'To the Nightingale, which the author heard sing on New Year's Day, 1792.'

The nest of the Nightingale, which is almost always placed on the ground, in some natural hollow, amongst the roots of a tree, on a bank, or at the foot of a hedgerow, though sometimes two or three feet from the surface, is very loosely put together, and is formed of various materials, such as dried stalks of grasses, and leaves, small fibrous roots, and bits of bark, lined with a few hairs and the finer portions of the grass. It is about five inches and a half in external diameter, by about three internally, and about three and a half deep.

Here again let me 'enter a plaint' in behalf of the bird and her nest. He who robs a Nightingale's nest robs his neighbour, as well as the owner of it, and is guilty at once of burglary and petty larceny. Mr. Meyer observes, 'The attachment of this species to its young, and its grief at their loss, have been noticed by many writers, ancient and modern. Our friend, the Rev. E. J. Moor, sends us, on this subject a memorandum from his journal: 'one evening, while I was at college,' he says, 'happening to drink tea with the late Rev. J. Lambert, fellow of Trinity College, he told me the following fact, illustrative of Virgil's extreme accuracy in describing natural objects. We had been speaking of those well-known lovely lines in the fourth Georgic on the Nightingale's lamentation for the loss of her young, when Mr. Lambert told me that riding once through one of the toll-gates near Cambridge, he observed the keeper of the gate and his wife, who were aged persons, apparently much dejected. Upon inquiring into the cause of their uneasiness, the man assured Mr. Lambert that he and his wife had both been made very unhappy by a Nightingale, which had built in their garden, and had the day before been robbed of its young. This loss she had been deploring in such a melancholy strain all the night, as not only to deprive him and his wife of sleep, but also to leave them in the morning full of sorrow; from which they had evidently not recovered when Mr. Lambert saw them.''

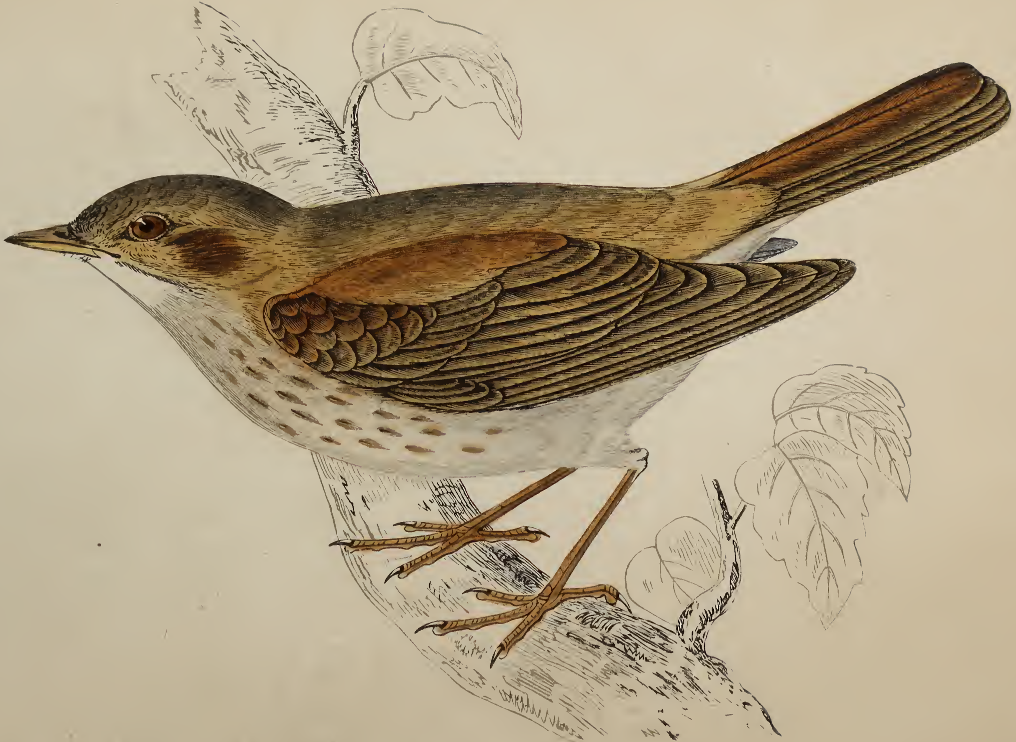
The eggs, of a regular oval form, are of a uniform glossy dull olive brown colour. They are sometimes tinged with greyish blue, especially at the smaller end; some are greenish; others brownish green; some are paler, mottled with olive brown; and some are longer in shape than others. They are four or five to six in number. They are laid in May, and are rather large for the size of the bird. The male and female both sit on them, but the latter the most. The young, which are hatched in June, often leave the nest and hop about on the ground in its neighbourhood before they are able to fly.

Male; weight, about six drachms; length, six inches and three quarters. The upper bill is blackish brown, with a tinge of red, the lower one pale yellowish, and dusky brown at the tip; iris, dark brown, the feathers of the eyelids brownish white. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, uniform dull chesnut brown; chin and throat, dull greyish white; breast, pale greyish brown, but lighter again lower down. Back, reddish brown, varying considerably in different individuals, some being much more red, and others more grey.

The wings, of eighteen quills, have the first quill feather very short, the second equal in length to the fifth, the third the longest, the fourth almost as long. They extend to the width of ten inches and a half; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, reddish brown, the inner webs dusky brown. The tail, which reaches an inch and a quarter beyond the closed wings, is rufous brown, and rather rounded at the end. It is straight and rather long, the feathers rather broad; under tail coverts, dull yellowish white. Legs, toes, and claws, pale greyish brown.

The female resembles the male, but is rather less in size. Length, six inches and a half; throat, not so white as in the male. The wings expand to ten inches in width.

The young have the feathers on the breast with dark margins, and the back spotted with reddish yellow or buff colour.



THRUSH NIGHTINGALE.

THRUSH NIGHTINGALE.

Sylvia Turdoides, MEYER.
Philomela Turdoides, BLYTH. GOULD.

Sylvia. *Sylva*—A wood. *Turdoides.* *Turdus*—A Thrush.
Eidos—The form, figure, or likeness of a thing.

THIS species occurs throughout Silesia, Bohemia, Pomerania, Franconia, and other parts of Germany; and is plentiful also in Hungary, Austria, and Poland, but more rare in France.

Mr. Gould says that it is generally found in woods situated on the tops of hills, and also in plains, particularly those in the neighbourhood of running streams.

One of these birds, a male, was captured near the village of Swalwell, three or four miles west of Newcastle, 'the Newcastle that is upon Tyne,' by Mr. Thomas Robson, of the former place. Another is recorded by Mr. Edward Newman in the 'Zoologist,' page 3476, as having been shot near Dartford, in Kent, on the 8th. of May, 1852. Mr. John Hancock procured the egg of another from Northamptonshire; and N. Rowe, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, has informed me that two eggs of this rare British bird were taken at Staddiscombe, near Plymouth, in Devonshire, in 1850, and that the Rev. H. Roundell procured others in Kent.

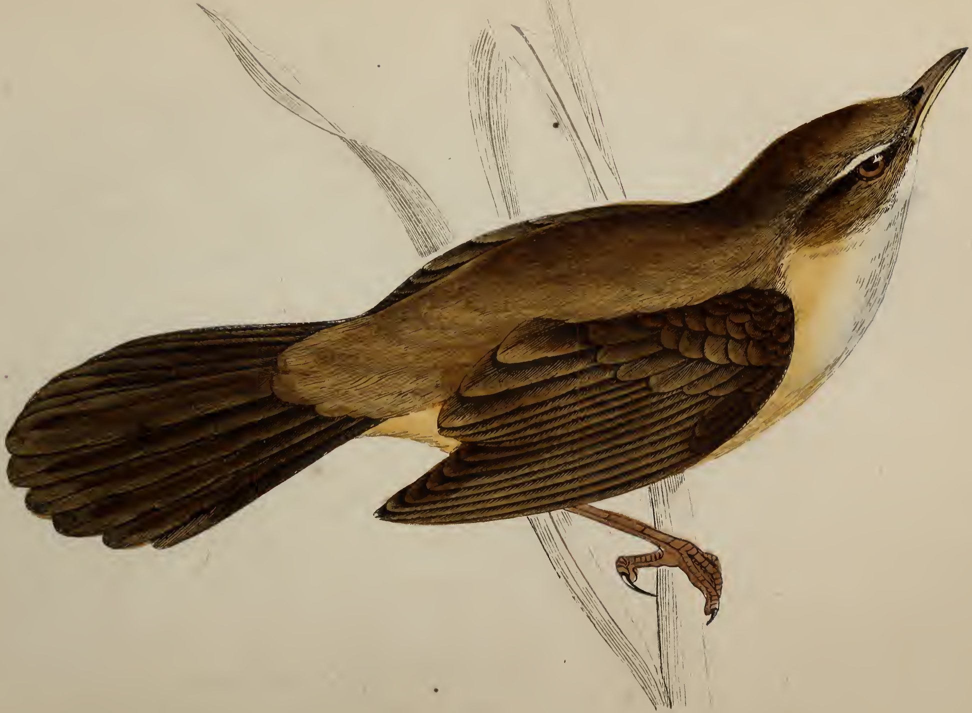
Its song, which is chiefly heard by night, is strong, loud, and deep; but, though more powerful, not so melodious as that of the Nightingale.

The nest is built in small thickets, but most frequently in low and damp situations.

The eggs are of a brownish olive colour, stained with deep brown.

Male; bill, dark brown; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, dark brown; chin, white; throat, whitish; breast, clear greyish brown, spotted with dark dashes; back, dark brown. Greater and lesser wing coverts, reddish brown; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brown. Tail, rich brownish red; legs and toes, light reddish brown; claws, blackish brown.

The female resembles the male.



GREAT SEDGE WARBLER.

GREAT SEDGE WARBLER.

Salicaria turdoides, SELBY.

Salix—A willow. *Turdoides*. *Turdus*—A Thrush. *Eidos*—The likeness or resemblance of any thing.

I AM exceedingly happy in being able to give a figure of the present species as a new British bird, having received information from Mr. Chaffey, of Dodington, Kent—information which may be most implicitly relied on—that one was killed in Kent on the 4th. of May, 1853, by the side of a pond near Sittingbourne, by Mr. G. Thomas, of that place.

The Great Sedge Warbler is exceedingly abundant in Holland, and frequents also the low flat lands of France to the shores of the English Channel, so that it is anything but surprising that one should have found its way across, a 'Pathfinder' perhaps for many another, or still more probably, a follower of many others which may have come over in previous years and have been overlooked.

Its food consists of insects—the smaller dragon-flies, gnats, and others.

This is considered a delightful Warbler, from whence its specific name, as approximating in the excellence of its tones to those of the Thrush. Its notes are hurried, but loud and rich.

The nest is located among the stalks of reeds.

The eggs are five in number, obtuse, greenish white, spotted with black and ash-colour.

Male; bill, brown, darkest along the upper edge and at the tip; over the eye is a white stripe. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, uniform light brown; chin, throat, and breast, white, delicately tinged with brown; back, light brown. Wings, brown; tail, light brown; legs and toes, light brown.

The female does not differ appreciably from the male.

RUFOUS SEDGE WARBLER.

Salicaria galactotes, Gould. Schlegel. Temminck.
Sylvia galactotes, Temminck.

Salicaria. *Salix*—A willow—as one might say, Willow Bird.
Galactotes—...........?

In Europe this newly-discovered British species inhabits Greece and Spain. It is also a native of Africa, belonging to Egypt; and in Asia has been obtained from the neighbourhood of Mount Caucasus.

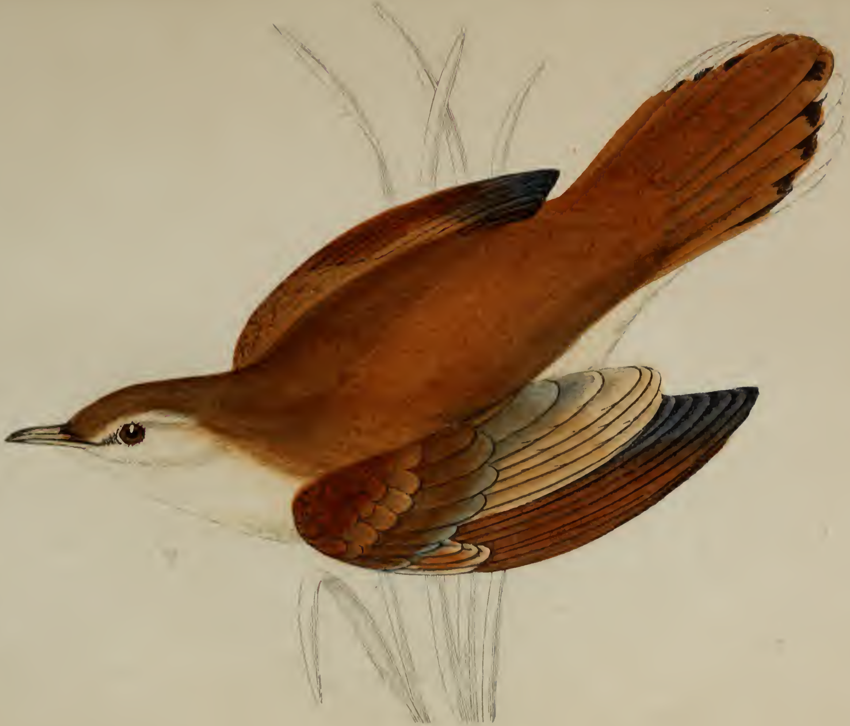
On the 16th. of September, 1854, one, a male, was shot in this country by Mr. G. Swaysland, of Brighton, near a part of the Sussex Downs, known by the name of Plumpton Bosthill.

This bird is described as of wary habits.

The eggs are of a pale greenish white colour, spotted and speckled over 'invicem' with two shades of darker greenish brown.

Male; length, seven inches. The bill is slightly curved; the upper mandible is brown above, the sides pale yellowish brown, of which colour is the lower mandible; from the base of the bill there is a dark streak going back to the eye. Iris, reddish brown; over and under the eye, and passing backwards, is a short cream-white streak. Head, crown, neck, and nape, fawn-colour; chin, throat, and breast, dull white; back, fawn-colour.

The wings have the first quill feather short, the second and sixth of nearly equal length, the third, fourth, and fifth equal in length, and at the same time the longest in the wing. Greater and lesser wing coverts, fawn-colour; primaries and secondaries, brown, the outer edges reddish buff; greater and lesser under wing coverts, delicate fawn-colour. The tail, which is much cuneated, and consists of twelve feathers, has



RUFOUS SEDGE WARBLER.

the two long middle ones reddish buff, the others reddish buff over two thirds of their length, each gradually shortening, then crossed by a broad band of black, the remainder white, the outside paler on each side, with the largest portion of white. Underneath the tail is marked as on the upper surface, but is not so bright. Upper tail coverts, reddish buff. Legs, toes, and claws, pale brown.

BLACKCAP.

BLACKCAP WARBLER. MOCK NIGHTINGALE.

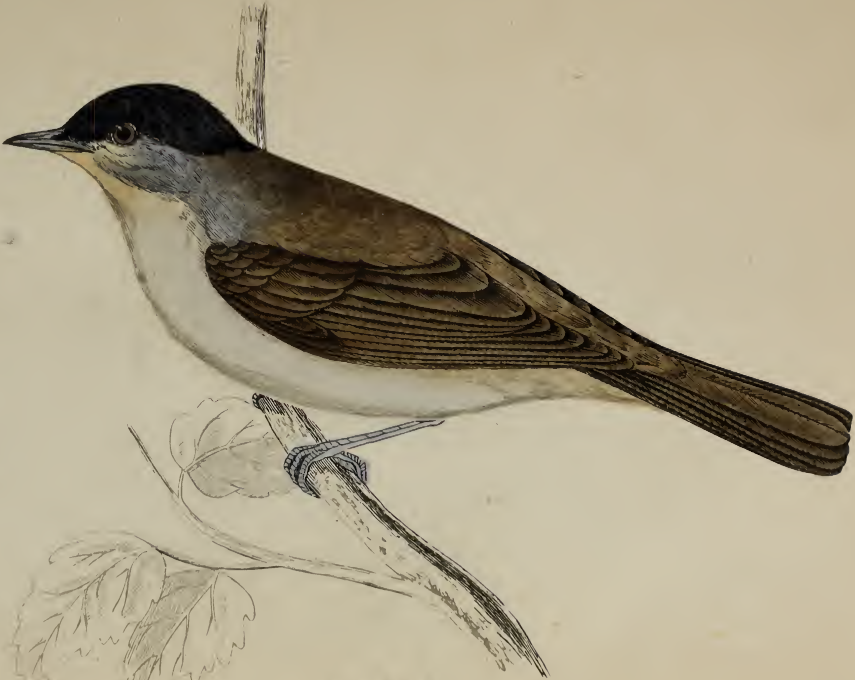
Sylvia atricapilla,	PENNANT. JENYNS.
Motacilla atricapilla,	MONTAGU. BEWICK.
" *mosquita,*	GMELIN.
Curruca atricapilla,	GOULD. FLEMING.

Sylvia. *Sylva*—A wood.
Atricapilla. *Ater*—Black. *Capillus*—The hair of the head.

THE Blackcap is more cosmopolite in its character than any other of the British Warblers. It frequents the whole of the temperate parts of Europe, from Spain and Portugal to Germany, Italy, Lapland, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. In Africa it is found from the northern parts to the Cape of Good Hope, and midway in Senegal, as likewise in Madeira and the Azores. In Asia also it is known, in Persia, Java, and Japan.

Throughout England it is met with in all quarters of the country, but mostly in the south, from Sussex to the Land's End, and from Suffolk and Norfolk to Derbyshire and Wales. In Cornwall it is scarce; in Yorkshire it is commonly distributed, but is least plentiful it is said near Huddersfield, where, however, some are believed to stay throughout the year. One was caught in the township of St. John in Bedwardine, near Worcester, on the 20th. of January, 1843. Another in January, about the year 1847, near Dover; and one on the 22nd. of December, 1852, in Norfolk.

In Ireland it seems to be a regular summer visitant to certain districts, but must be considered very local. Dr. Harvey, in his 'Fauna of Cork,' mentions two taken there in November, 1839; and one was found dead in the garden of Mr. Ball, near Youghal, in the second week in January, 1838. Robert J. Montgomery, Esq., Jun., shot two on the



BLACKCAP.

21st. of December, 1848, at the Manor House, Raheny, near Dublin. Mr. Templeton noticed it at his own residence, Cranmore, on the 17th. of June, 1818, and twice since. One was procured in the garden of the Bishop of Down, near Belfast, on the 1st. of March, 1834: one near Dublin, the first week in December, 1833; and one in the Phœnix Park, about the middle of May, 1844. Two in the same locality in December, 1843; one at Donnybrook, once so celebrated for its fair, in October, 1846; one at Rathfarnham, also in the same county, in January, 1847; and one at Moore's 'Sweet Vale of Avoca,' in the county of Wicklow, on the 23rd. of May, 1837. One of a small party of six or seven, probably the family of the year, was procured at Clonmel, on the 27th. of December, 1834; others at Ballibrado, in the county of Tipperary; one near Waterford on the 9th. of October, 1830, and another on the 21st. of August, 1834, at Dunmore, in that county; and one at Dunmore, in Galway, on the 1st. of November, 1842.

In Scotland it is sparingly distributed throughout the southern parts. Mr. T. Edwards has heard them sing near Banff, at Mayen and Rothiemary, and in the grounds of Duff House. It is not uncommon in the Valley of the Clyde, especially about Hamilton. They occur also near Paisley in Renfrewshire, Stevenston, in Ayrshire, and have been met with in Perthshire and Forfarshire.

In Orkney one was shot in Sanday, in the summer of 1846.

It haunts thick hedges and brakes, woods, groves, and plantations, shrubberies, lanes, orchards, copses, and thickets.

It migrates hither, in uncertain numbers, the middle of April, or earlier with the season, and leaves again in September. In late seasons it does not arrive till the beginning of May, and has been observed on the other hand on the 9th. of April. One has been killed in Kent, in January, and one seen in Surrey in December; and Mr. Allis says that he has been informed that some have been known to remain throughout the year in Yorkshire. The males do not travel quite 'pari passu' with the females, but arrive some days before them. It appears however to be certain, from the many instances already adduced, that some must stay with us every winter, and especially, it would seem, in Ireland.

It is a bird of rather shy and timid habits, and at the same time lively and restless in its movements, quickly retiring, on being observed, into the denser parts of its cover. It is also of a solitary nature, more than two individuals being seldom seen in company. The cultivated parts of the country are its resort. It is capable of being kept in confinement. In the 'Zoologist,' page 356, Vivian Walmesley, Esq. relates a curious circumstance of a Blackcap attacking a rabbit which he had shot, and appearing to triumph at its death.

It seldom takes a long flight, but flits from bush to bush.

The Blackcap feeds on insects, caterpillars, berries, ivy and others, and fruits, such as strawberries, raspberries, cherries, pears, and currants. The first-named are sometimes captured when flying, but chiefly found in various parts of the trees or bushes which the bird frequents, and in pursuit, or rather in search of them, it creeps among the dense foliage, or threads its way through the tangled underwood with the most graceful nimbleness and minute investigation.

A very beautiful roundelay is that of the Blackcap, inferior only in the estimation of many to that of the Nightingale. It is usually first heard in the middle of April, but in very mild seasons has been noticed so soon as the 29th. of March. It will sometimes be continued until August, if there should be a second brood. Its tones, though desultory, are very rich, deep, full, loud, varied, sweetly wild and witching. It is generally given forth from some of the higher branches or twigs of the bush or hedge. The notes of other birds are also imitated—those of the Nightingale, Blackbird, Robin, Thrush, and Garden Warbler. The throat is much distended in a somewhat curious manner, while the bird is singing. When the young are hatched, 'the song becomes broken, the melody gradually ceases, and we hear only the usual call-notes. Either are easily interrupted; and a slight noise, or the intrusion of a stranger, will induce silence, and the bird will remove itself gradually and quietly to the closer parts of the thicket; or having gained the edge of a more limited shrubbery, it will silently flit to some more extensive and secure retreat.'

The nest, built about the end of May or the beginning of June, is commonly placed in a bramble or other bush, sometimes in a honeysuckle, a raspberry, or currant tree, about two or three feet or rather more from the ground; sometimes among nettles. It is made of dry grass and small fibrous roots, with occasionally a little moss and hair—the latter as a lining, and the outer parts cemented together with spiders' webs and wool. It is strong and tolerably compact, though slight. Anything like meddling with it, or intruding upon it, is jealously watched, and the smallest disturbance causes the nest to be forsaken. Several in fact are frequently abandoned, either from apprehension or caprice, before they have been finished. Alfred Newton, Esq., of Elveden Hall, near Thetford, mentions in the 'Zoologist,' page 1024, his having known a nest to be found there on the 11th. of March, 1845, which contained an egg at that early date.

The eggs, usually four or five in number, are of a pale greenish white colour, mottled with light brown and grey, with a few spots and streaks of dark brown. They vary a good deal both in size and shape.

Frederick Stafford, Esq., of De Warren House, Northfleet, Kent, has informed me of his having obtained from the county of Norfolk, four eggs of this species of a beautiful salmon-colour, in no way the effect of incubation, as only one egg had been deposited when the nest was first discovered. This pink variety is not very unfrequent. J. A. Drake, Esq. has also forwarded me a good variety.

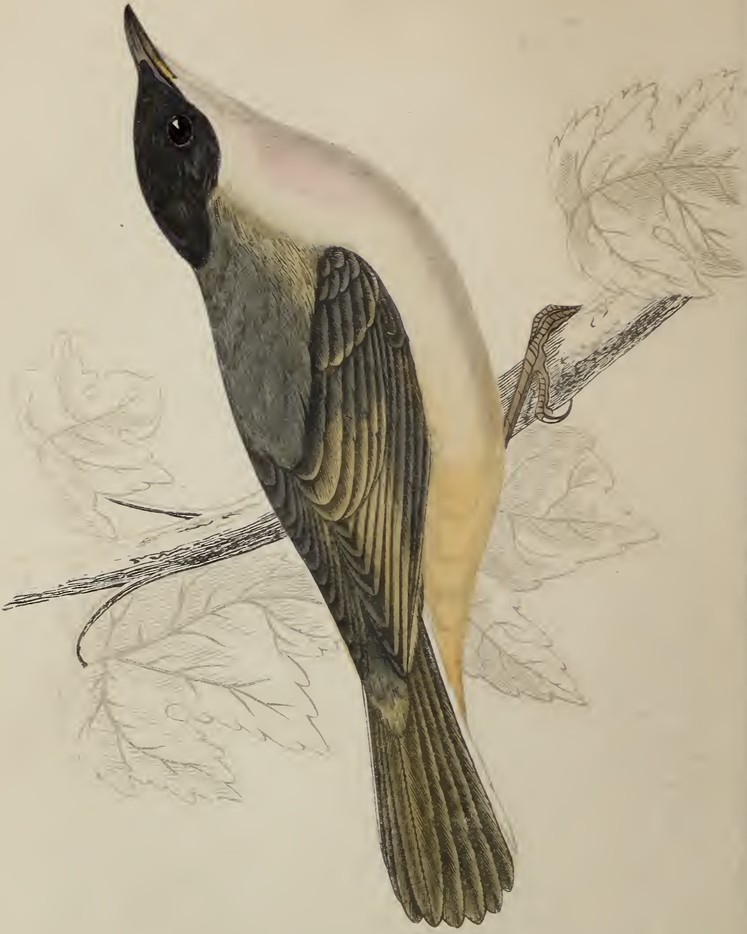
Both birds sit on the eggs, but the female naturally the most. The male frequently sings while so engaged. The female, when sitting, is occasionally fed by her partner. The young are said to leave the nest rather soon, roosting with their parents on the adjoining boughs.

Male; weight, about four drachms and a half; length, five inches and three quarters to six inches and a trifle over; bill, dark horn-colour, paler beneath, the edges yellowish grey; the inside of the mouth bluish grey; iris, dark brown. Head on the crown, black; its sides, the neck on the back, and nape, ash-coloured; chin, throat, and breast, ash-coloured, the latter white on the lower part, tinged with yellowish grey. Back, brownish ash-colour.

The wings, which extend to nine inches and about a quarter, have the first quill feather very short, the second longer than the sixth, but shorter than the fifth, the third the longest; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, greyish brown, their outer edges pale yellowish brown; underneath they are grey; greater and lesser under wing coverts, white. Tail underneath, grey; legs and toes, lead-coloured, the latter tinged with green beneath; claws, brown.

The female resembles the male, but her plumage is more tinged with brown. Length, six inches and nearly a quarter. Head on the sides, grey, with a greenish tinge; on the crown, reddish brown, reaching farther back than in the male; nape, grey, with a greenish tinge. Breast, yellowish brown, approaching to white on the centre, and darker on the sides and across the breast. The wings expand to the width of nine inches and a quarter.

The young, when fully fledged, resemble the adult bird. Head on the crown, greyish brown.



ORPH

ORPHEAN WARBLER.

Sylvia Orphea,	TEMMINCK.
" *grisea,*	VIEILLOT.
Curruca Orphea,	GOULD.

Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Orphea. Orpheus*—A famous musician of antiquity.

THIS species is a common one in the southern parts of France, and is very abundant in Italy, particularly in Lombardy and Piedmont, also in Tuscany; and is sometimes found in Switzerland and the adjacent districts.

One specimen of this bird, an 'avant courier' it may be hoped of others, was shot on the 6th. of July, 1848, in a small plantation near Wetherby, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and preserved by Mr. Graham, of York, for William Mordaunt Edward Milner, Esq., M.P. for York. It was a female, and appeared to have been sitting the same summer: the male bird was also observed with it for a considerable time previously. An account of this interesting occurrence was published in the 'Zoologist,' pages 3107-8-9-10.

Its food is composed of insects and berries.

The Orphean Warbler builds sometimes in low bushes, often in company with others of the same species, and not uncommonly in holes of rocks and walls, as also in the eaves and roofs of deserted or isolated houses and buildings.

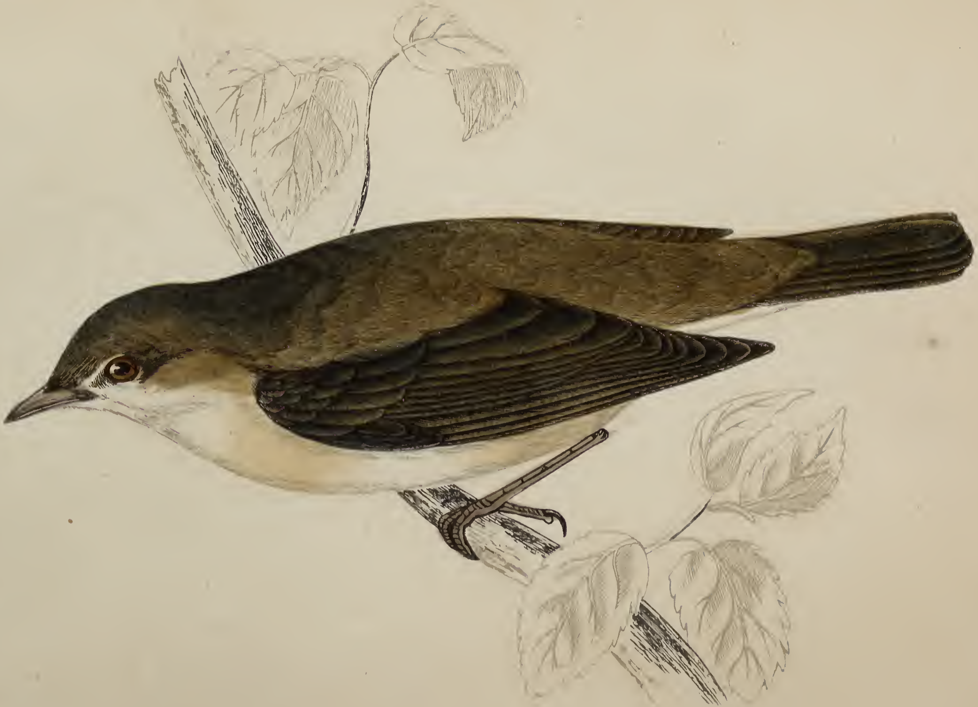
The eggs are four or five in number, nearly white, irregularly marked with yellowish blots and brown spots, chiefly at the larger end.

Male; length, a little over six inches; bill, black, thick, and very strong, the upper mandible very much grooved, the lower one yellowish brown at its base; head on the crown, brownish black, fading into the colour of the back; neck on the back, and nape, cinereous brown, with a tinge of olive;

chin and throat, white; breast, white, with a very delicate rose tint.

Wings, almost black, edged with ash-coloured brown; primaries, dark cinereous brown, with a tinge of olive; tail, dark cinereous brown, with a tinge of olive, the outer feather on each side being white, tinged with reddish brown on its inner edge, the second tipped with white; under tail coverts, pale reddish brown; legs, toes, and claws, black and strong.

Female; length, a little over six inches; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, dark ash-coloured brown; chin, dull white; throat and breast, white, ending in light brown; back, dark-coloured brown. Wings, underneath, light brown; tail, brownish black, the outermost feather on each side white, and the next edged with dull white; legs, very strong; toes and claws, black.



GARDEN WARBLER

GARDEN WARBLER.

GREATER PETTYCHAPS.

Sylvia hortensis,	LATHAM. BECHSTEIN.
Curruca hortensis,	SELBY.
Motacilla hortensis,	MONTAGU.

Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Hortensis*—Belonging to gardens.

DR. LATHAM was the first to notice this as a British bird,—a specimen having been obtained in Lancashire, and forwarded to him by Sir Ashton Lever, the founder of the Leverian Museum.

It is found throughout the continent of Europe, from Italy to Denmark and Sweden in the summer.

In Yorkshire it occurs in various situations, as near Huddersfield and Hebden Bridge, Halifax, Sheffield, Leeds, and York; in the East-Riding it is more uncommon, being mostly met with in its passage. Mr. B. Fawcett, of Driffield, obtained one in his garden there, the present year, 1853, and from it the plate is coloured. Near Scarborough it is scarce, according to Mr. Patrick Hawkridge, in 'The Naturalist,' old series, vol. ii., p. 333. In Norfolk it is not very numerous. In Oxfordshire it occurs in gardens in abundance, as likewise in Cambridgeshire. In Derbyshire it is sparingly distributed. It occurs also in Wiltshire, Suffolk, Devonshire, Lincolnshire, Durham, Northumberland, and other counties. In Cornwall it is rare—has been met with at Budock.

In Scotland it has been noticed in Dalkeith Park and Midcalder, Lothian, between Lasswade and Roslin, at Newbattle and Dalhousie, the Corstorphine Hill and Currie near Edinburgh, and various other parts.

In Ireland it seems to be extremely rare. Mr. Templeton met with one on the 21st. of May, 1820. It regularly breeds in the gardens about Sunday's Well, near Cork; and also has been observed at Ballibrado, in the county of Tipperary, more years than one, by Mr. Henry Fennell, of that place.

This is a very favourite bird of mine, one that you always fancy to be uncommon, even while knowing that the contrary is the case. It is frequently overlooked, like others of divers races who are of a retiring nature, and more disposed to earn than to seek the reward of merit.

For the most part it frequents gardens, as its name indicates, and also orchards and woods, even such as are more remote from human habitation, leaving the latter however in the autumn for the former. It often builds close to houses.

It arrives in this country about the end of April or beginning of May,, and departs again in September.

In its habits it is unobtrusive, shy, and retiring, especially when engaged with its nest, and always interesting to watch. It is extremely active and agile, gliding quickly among the boughs and branches of its shelter, and when on the ground advancing by a series of leaps. Its sweet song generally gives you notice of its vicinity, but if your neighbourhood is made known to it, the song ceases, and the bird drops silently into the nearest cover, and from thence retreats by hopping or flitting to some more secure distance. It is capable of being kept in confinement.

Its manner of flight is short and rapid.

Insects, caterpillars, worms, and fruits are its food, and with the latter the young are also at times fed; the former are sometimes captured on the wing, the bird darting upwards after them, and their unerring capture is indicated by an audible snap of the bill. Most fruits, both wild and cultivated, seem to suit its taste—the berries of the elder, the privet, the ivy, the barberry, the plum, the apple, the pear, cherries, strawberries, figs, and peas.

Its note, which is heard up to August, is exquisitely sweet, rich, and flute-like. It is one of those species which, as the Psalmist says, 'sing among the branches.' Its voice is mostly uttered from the depth of some shady recess, but sometimes also from the top of a moderate-sized tree. Some of the notes are low and soft, others loud and clear, and the harmony of the whole falls with a most pleasing cadence on the ear of the listener. It is heard throughout the greater part of the day.

The nest is made of goose-grass, and other grasses, straws, and small roots, mixed sometimes with a small quantity of moss, and lined with a little wool or horse-hair, and fine fibres of plants. It is attached to the branches with spider-cots and the cocoons of chrysalides. It is generally placed between the branches of some low blackthorn, whitethorn, or other bush, not far from the ground, as also at times on the ground among the taller wild plants. It is rather loosely constructed. One is said to have been found in an open field among some tares, and another has been taken in a row of peas in a garden by Mr. Yarrell. Mr. Jesse mentions his having found one three times in succession among the 'Ivy green' against a wall. It is not very carefully concealed.

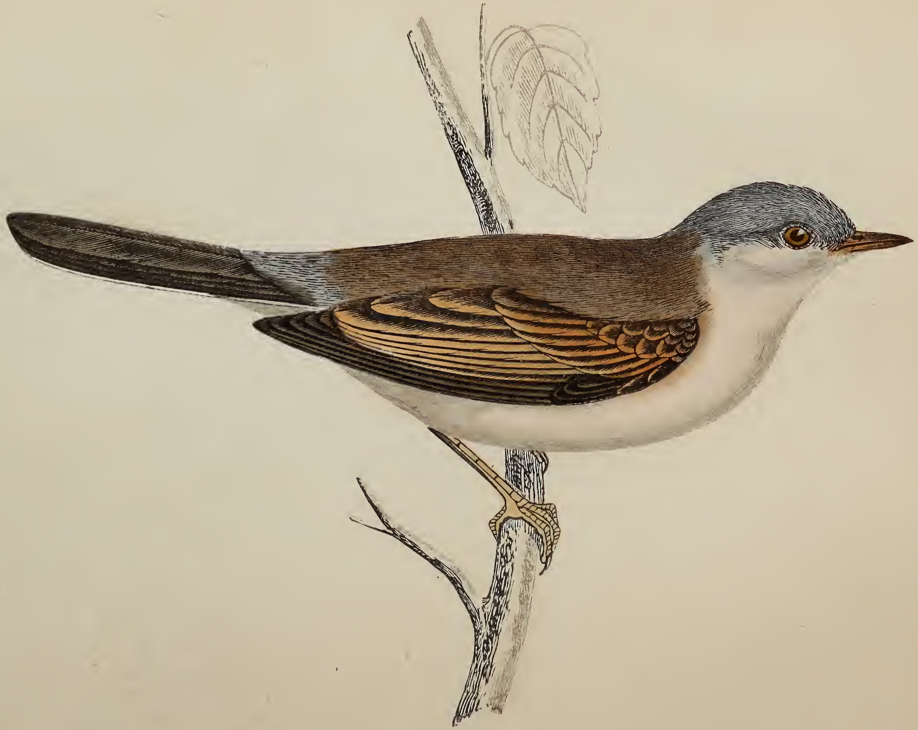
The eggs, four or five in number, of a dull yellowish grey, or pale purple brown, spotted and blotted with darker markings of the latter colour. James Dalton, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, has obligingly forwarded me a specimen from the beautiful gardens of that College, where it used to my knowledge to be an annual visitant.

Both male and female are believed to take their turn on the nest. Two broods are commonly reared in the season.

Male; weight, somewhat above five drachms; length, about six inches; bill, dusky brown, the base and edges of the lower mandible yellow, the inside of the mouth orange; iris, dark brown—a small space round it is whitish. Head on the sides, pale brownish; on the crown, the neck on the back, and the nape, light greyish brown, with a faint tinge of olive; the neck on the sides is brownish grey; chin and throat, yellowish white, the lower part of the latter and upper part of the breast tinged with reddish brown, as are the sides, the remainder yellowish white, almost white below. The wings, which extend to the width of nine inches, are broad and rather pointed; the first feather is extremely short, being only a fifth of the length of the second, which is as long as the fourth, and shorter than the third, which is the longest in the wing; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, light dusky brown, slightly margined with olive; greater and lesser under wing coverts, of a fine buff yellow. Tail, straight, the feathers narrow, and dusky brown in colour; under tail coverts, pale greyish brown, the margins white. Toes and claws, greyish brown.

The female closely resembles the male both in size and appearance, but is lighter in colour on the upper part, and more uniformly greyish brown beneath.

The young, when fledged, resemble the old birds, but the space about the eyes is greyish white. The breast is more tinged with yellow; back, of a richer yellowish brown tint. Greater and lesser under wing coverts, pure yellow. Toes and claws, yellowish brown.



WHITETHROAT.

WHITETHROAT.

COMMON WHITETHROAT. MUGGY. NETTLE-CREEPER.

Sylvia cinerea,	PENNANT. JENYNS.
Motacilla sylvia,	MONTAGU. BEWICK.
Curruca sylvia,	FLEMING.
" *cinerea,*	GOULD.

Sylvia *Sylva*—A wood. *Cinerea*—Cinereous—ash-coloured.

THIS appears to be the commonest of the Warblers that are summer visitors to this country.

In Europe it is known likewise in Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Norway, and the more temperate parts of Siberia; Germany, Holland, France, Spain, Italy, and Sardinia. In Asia it has also been noticed, in Asia Minor.

It is to be seen in every county of England, from Kent and Sussex to Cornwall and Durham and Northumberland. In Yorkshire it is common, but is less numerous farther north.

In Scotland it has been seen in Sutherlandshire and Argyleshire, and indeed in most of the sheltered valleys of the north; and in Ireland is also a periodical visitant.

In Orkney one was shot in Sanday, by the late William Strang, Esq., the 27th. of May, 1850.

It frequents hedges principally, as also the outskirts of plantations and borders of woods, gardens and whin covers, thickets and any brushwood, as well on low as on higher ground. In summer, when the young are able to fly, their parents often bring them into gardens, where they do some mischief among the fruit.

About the third week in April, or a little later, is the period of its appearance among us, arriving in Scotland sometimes not before the 10th. of May. The males come over about ten or twelve days before the females. They leave again about the end of September. One was noticed in Scotland by Mr. Weir on the 10th. of September. In Ireland they usually arrive the beginning of May, but sometimes earlier. Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, heard one near there on the 23rd. of April, 1842, and another was observed at Cromac on the 24th. of April, 1836; one near Carricfergus on the 21st. of April. Its earliest arrival noted in the county of Wexford was the 1st. of May, and the latest the 21st. of August; but one was seen near Belfast on the 15th. of September, 1837, and one was shot in December, 1843, at Raheny, near Dublin, by Mr. R. J. Montgomery.

They are very lively and active in their habits, and somewhat, though not very, shy, skuttling away into their cover on any alarm: more than two are not seen together. They are easily kept in confinement, but are said to grow less and less familiar as they get older, even if reared from the nest. They delight to mob cats if they make their appearance, and keep up the note of alarm until they have retreated. Meyer mentions one which, no doubt to attract him from its nest, which was near, threw itself down the side of a bank, and then struggled and shuffled along, keeping itself just out of reach, until it finally flew away.

Caterpillars, small beetles and other winged insects, and the smaller fruits and berries—currants, raspberries, gooseberries, elderberries, cherries, and other such, compose their food. The former as well as the latter are sought among shrubs, bushes, and plants, and also at times pursued in the air. Sand and other stony particles are found in considerable quantity in the gizzard, to aid the digestion of the food.

The song of this species, which is heard immediately after its arrival, is quick and hurried: some of the notes, which are few, and therefore often repeated, are sweet and pleasing, though others are perhaps rather harsh. While singing lustily the throat is distended, the crest rather raised, which indeed is done at all times when the bird is excited, and the wings and the tail frequently shaken. Sometimes it sings in the air, hovering in an odd sort of flickering manner, occasionally poising itself, or even rising in a fitful fanciful way over and around the bush or tree from which it has arisen, and into which it again descends, or flitting to some neighbouring tree, from whence again it frequently returns; it also sings at times when flying from bush to bush. Its alarm note has been likened to the syllable 'shurr,' and the call-note to 'hwed, hwed;' a common 'cha, cha, cha' is also very frequent when it is in some secluded shelter, but is left off when disturbed. Mr. Jesse says that he has noticed that it imitates the notes of the Swallow and the Sparrow, and has also observed that the imitative notes are always the commencement of the song. The Whitethroat begins to sing at early dawn, and is often heard at mid-day, and till the dusk of the evening. 'If you be walking,' says Mr. Weir, 'along a hedge in the early twilight, the little creature is sure to come up, announcing its presence by its song, and flitting in advance for perhaps a long way. One morning in July, 1835, when approaching Edinburgh, after walking all night from Glasgow, I encountered several Whitethroats in this manner, some of which accompanied or preceded me several hundred yards, although I could not see one of them.' 'Although it allows a person to approach very near, it flits incessantly and with extreme agility among the twigs, and if pursued, generally keeps on the other side of the hedge, flies off to a short distance, emits its song, sometimes while on wing, more frequently the moment it alights, then glides along, takes flight again, sings, and so continues for a long time. If you follow it to a distance, it often returns in the same manner.' The song ceases about the middle of July. The objurgatory note, if the nest be approached, is a sort of 'churr.'

The nest, thin in width and loosely compacted, though still elastic and not flimsy, is placed near the ground, not more than two or three feet above it, in a low hedge, or sometimes in a bramble, furze, sloe, wild rose, or other bush, as also frequently among nettles or other tall weeds or herbaceous plants on the ground, or beside a bank; Mr. Jesse mentions one built in a vine close to a window. It is for the most part a 'straw-built shed,' composed chiefly of dried stalks of grasses, though other plants are occasionally used, and lined with finer portions of the same, and a good deal of hair of various kinds, with which it is often, though not always, thickly woven on the inside, which gives it accordingly more or less consistency. The same situation is frequently resorted to year after year; a trifling disturbance will cause the owner to desert it before the eggs are laid, but the reverse is the case afterwards: much care is not taken in its concealment. The young quit the nest early, even before they are full able to fly, if alarmed for their safety. Two broods, and not uncommonly three, are reared in the season; in the south of Scotland, however, the first nest is seldom completed before the end of May. The bird has been known to build close to a public road, and in the immediate vicinity also of an occupied dwelling-house.

The eggs, four or five in number, are of a greenish white ground colour, with spots and speckles of greenish grey and brownish grey.

Male; weight, about four drachms; length, from about five inches and a half to nearly six inches; bill, bluish brown; the base of the under mandible yellowish brown, and the corners of the mouth yellowish green; between it and the eye is a tinge of grey; iris, bronze yellow; eyelids, olive brown; over the eye is a streak of yellowish white. Head on the crown, slate grey, with a tinge of brown; neck on the sides, pale brownish grey; on the back and nape, lighter greyish brown than the head; chin and throat, silvery white; the latter has the feathers somewhat puffed out, as when it is inflated in singing; breast above, pale dull white, tinged with rose-colour, and on the sides shaded off to yellowish white, and into greyish white below; back, reddish brown, but tinged with olive on its lower part.

The wings, which extend to within an inch and a half of the end of the tail, and expand to the width of eight inches and a half, have the first feather extremely short, the second and third of equal length, and the longest in the wing; the edge of the outer quill is white; underneath, they are grey; greater and lesser wing coverts, reddish brown; primaries, pale brown, narrowly edged, and the secondaries and tertiaries also pale brown, broadly edged with brighter chesnut than the former. The tail, somewhat rounded, the feathers being graduated and slightly decreasing in length from the middle to the side ones, is brown, the margins light coloured, the outer feather on each side dull white over the greater portion, or even the whole of the outer web, and often a portion of the inner; the next two feathers are tipped with the same; underneath, the tail is grey; upper tail coverts inclining to olive brown; under tail coverts, pale brownish white, with a tinge of faint rose red. Legs, pale rust-coloured brown; toes, rather darker, with more of an olive tinge; the claws, dusky brown.

The female is of duller hue altogether, and is nearly without the rose tint on the breast.

The young, when fledged, have the bill less dusky than in the old birds, and there is a light space between it and the eye; the breast is greyish white, tinged with brown; the back and all the upper parts are of a uniform reddish brown; the quill feathers more broadly margined with light red; the side tail feathers reddish white; the shafts dusky.

Mr. Macgillivray writes, 'Individuals shot in May vary little in their colours, and are generally in full plumage, with the tips and edges of the feathers entire. It is therefore certain that this species moults in its southern residence. Individuals, however, occur in which some of the old feathers remain. I have before me, on the 25th. of May, 1837, two specimens recently shot. In the female the plumage is all new and perfect; the tail considerably rounded, the two middle feathers being longest, the lateral three eighths of an inch shorter; while the male, although otherwise fresh, has one of the middle tail feathers quite ragged, half of the outer web being worn off, and the other middle feather growing, and shorter than the lateral, both which are also unrenewed; the wings and the rest of the plumage are perfect. As the season advances, the colours fade, and the feathers are more or less worn; the upper parts assume a greyer tint, and the lower a more dusky hue, the reddish colour on the fore-neck becoming more conspicuous; the red edgings on the quills are sometimes almost obliterated, and the head is much darker. In specimens shot in July the tail feathers are often in a singularly ragged condition, especially the two middle and the lateral.'

LESSER WHITETHROAT.

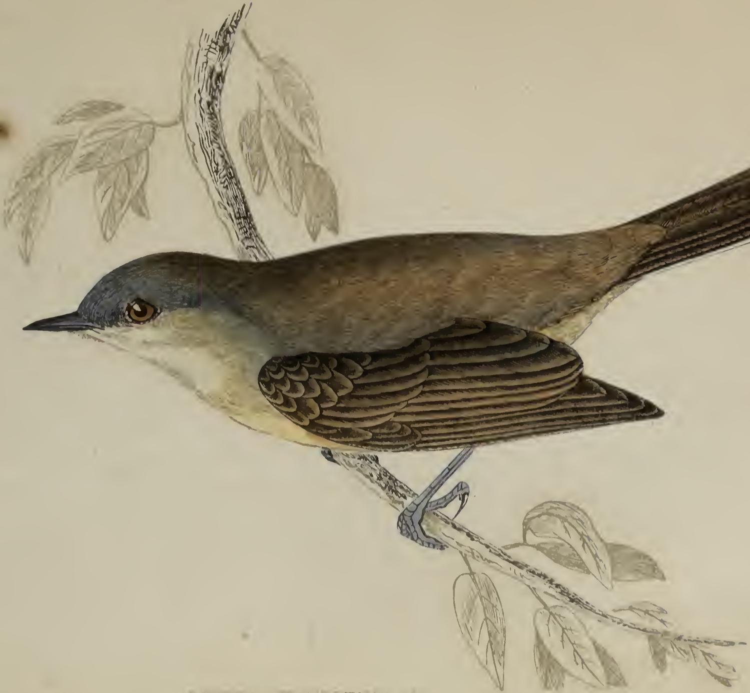
Sylvia sylviella,	PENNANT. MONTAGU.
" *dumetorum,*	LATHAM.
" *curruca,*	TEMMINCK.
Motacilla curruca,	LINNÆUS.
" *sylviella,*	BEWICK.
" *dumetorum,*	GMELIN.
Curruca sylviella,	FLEMING.
" *garrula,*	GOULD.

Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Sylviella*—A diminutive of *Sylva.*

THE Rev. John Lightfoot was the first discoverer of this as a British species, having met with it near Bulstrode, in Buckinghamshire.

On the continent this plain-plumaged but beautiful little bird is met with from south to north, as far as Sweden, from Spain and Italy, but migratory in all. In Asia also it has been noticed, in the East Indies.

The Lesser Whitethroat is found throughout the southern and eastern counties of England, and becomes more rare to the westward and northward. In Yorkshire it is not an unusual species in the neighbourhood of Thirsk, as Mr. Swarbreck writes me word; also near Halifax, Doncaster, Huddersfield, Hebden-Bridge, Sheffield, and York: near Bridlington it is seldom seen, and then only in spring and autumn, and is not known to breed there. In Cumberland one was shot by Mr. J. Barnes, at Rose Hill, near Carlisle, in the summer of 1849. In Devonshire one was shot at Mutley, recorded by R. A. Julian, Esq., Junior, in 'The Naturalist,' volume i, page 87; it occurs also in other parts. In Cornwall two were seen near Budock Church, March 14th., 1848, as mentioned by Mr. Cocks, page 63. In Cambridgeshire it is far from uncommon. In Derbyshire it is common, and in Surrey is extremely plentiful. It is found in Durham, Wiltshire,



LESSER WHITETHROAT.

Hampshire, Somersetshire, Gloucestershire, Suffolk, Norfolk, Bucks., Lincolnshire, and Northumberland.

In Wales it is rare.

In Scotland it has been noticed near Edinburgh, where, however, it is extremely rare; as also at Musselburgh, and in Haddingtonshire and Ayrshire; also about Paisley, in Renfrewshire; and more commonly, it is said, at Hamilton, in Lanarkshire.

It has not yet been met with in Ireland or in Orkney.

This bird frequents gardens, hedges, copses, shrubberies, and thickets, especially the first-named if affording ample shelter. It is not unfrequently to be seen in trees, where, perched on some open branch, with its plumage puffed out, its snow-white breast is an object of observation. It is at times to be observed on commons, but only where there are trees.

It arrives here about the middle or the latter part of April, but sometimes earlier, for Mr. Edward Blyth has taken the nest on the 23rd. It reaches Scotland about the 10th. of May; and even in England is occasionally as late as the beginning of that month. Some few remain till the first week in October, but the greater number take their departure in September.

In its habits it appears shy and retiring, but is also noisy, volatile, cheerful, spirited, and restless, so that it is the more frequently under observation, but keeping especially close if approached, when it utters its alarm note, in the midst of the tangled underwood, where it builds, through the interstices of which it threads its way with extreme readiness. It is of a pugnacious and petulant disposition, attacking and driving away other birds of larger size than itself. It is able to be kept in confinement. It may be seen sometimes crossing a field, or flying from one tree to another in a fluttering unsteady sort of manner, and in any way but 'as the crow flies,' uttering its monotonous cry all along.

Insects of different kinds and their larvæ are their ordinary food, and the winged kinds are sometimes taken in the air, while the others are assiduously sought after among the leaves and branches. They make sad havoc in gardens among such fruits and vegetables as currants, cherries, raspberries, and peas; but the evil is abundantly recompensed by the vast quantity of aphides and injurious insects which they otherwise destroy.

The song is short and of small compass, being without any very great variety, and the ordinary note somewhat harsh, in the estimation of most; at times, however, a faint and low inward warble is audible, often continued, almost without any cessation, for several minutes. The song generally ends with the harsher shake, which is loud and shrill. It is usually uttered from the depth of the brake or cover, though occasionally from the summit of a bush or branch of a tree, and also on the wing. It is heard till nearly the end of July. A 'sip, sip, sip' is frequently introduced; the common note, however, is the only one that is heard on the wing, unless when the bird is immediately about to alight, and then the pleasing warble just now spoken of is sometimes to be heard: a low gurgling sound is on some occasions emitted also by this bird.

The nest, which is begun about three weeks after the arrival of the birds, is of slight construction, and is made of dry grass and a little wool, or moss but rarely, lined with small fibres, roots, and hairs; it is rather loosely interwoven, and is bound together with spiders' webs and such like materials. It is sometimes placed among the herbage on a bank, as well as in the lower part of a hedge, or in some low shrub—a nut tree, gooseberry bush, blackthorn, broom, woodbine, and among briers and brambles, generally at a height, in the latter, of about four or five feet from the ground, but sometimes as much as six, seven, eight, or even ten.

The eggs are of a greenish white colour, spotted, most numerously at the larger end, and sometimes in the way of a zone, with small dots and patches of brown and light grey. James Dalton, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, has forwarded me a specimen for the use of this work.

Incubation lasts from twelve to fourteen days, commencing about the 20th. of May. Two, and sometimes even possibly three, broods are reared in the season.

The young birds in their nesting plumage nearly resemble the old ones, but the colour of the head and the back are more uniform.

Male; length, five inches and a quarter; bill, brownish black; the base of the lower mandible, brownish yellow; iris, yellowish white; it is said to become whiter with age, and in some specimens to be perfectly white. Head on the crown, brownish grey, darker than the back; neck and nape, brownish grey; chin, throat, and breast, white, the latter tinged with red, the sides brownish or yellowish grey, but all with a shade of pink; back, brownish grey, inclining to pale yellowish brown on its lower part.

The wings extend to the width of eight inches; the quills are eighteen in number; the first is very short, the second rather shorter than the third, which and the fourth are of nearly equal length, and at the same time the longest in the wings: underneath, the wings are grey; greater and lesser wing coverts, widely edged with yellowish brown; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, blackish brown, edged with greyish or yellowish brown, the latter the most widely so. The tail, rather long, blackish brown, the outer feather on each side with an oblique longitudinal band of greyish white extending over the outer half of the inner web and the whole of the outer one; the tips of the next three feathers are also whitish; underneath, the tail is grey. Legs, toes, and claws, bluish grey.

The female is slightly smaller; she resembles the male in appearance, but the sides of the head are paler in colour, the crown, the neck on the back, and nape have the grey tinged with brown, the back and upper parts more tinged with yellowish brown, and the breast with grey.

In the young the eye is dark coloured.

WOOD WARBLER.

YELLOW WARBLER. WOOD WREN. LARGER WILLOW WREN.
YELLOW WILLOW WREN. GREEN WREN.

Sylvia sylvicola,	PENNANT.
Motacilla trochilus,	BEWICK.
Sylvia sibilatrix,	SELBY.
Curruca sibilatrix,	FLEMING.
Regulus non-cristatus major,	WILLUGHBY.

Sylvia. *Sylva*—A wood. *Sylvicola*—An inhabitant of woods.
Sylva—A wood. *Colo*—To inhabit.

THIS little bird is also a native of Europe, being met with from Germany, Holland, and France, to Sweden. It is not however anywhere very plentiful.

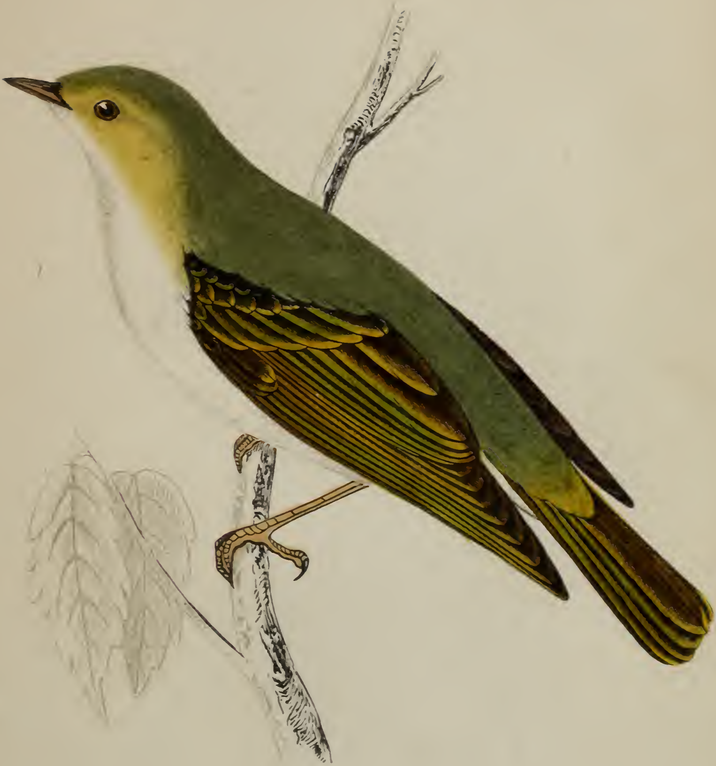
It passes the winter in Asia and Africa, Egypt, and other northern parts.

It is not uncommon in most of the southern counties, as far west as Devonshire, and Montagu says Cornwall; also in Suffolk, Norfolk, Derbyshire, Durham, and Northumberland. In Cambridgeshire it is said to be more rare. It advances some way into Scotland, and is found also in Wales.

It betakes itself to woods and plantations, preferring those of larger size to smaller thickets, and gardens, frequenting those where ancient trees flourish—the wide-spreading beech, and the noble oak, the graceful birch, and the stately pine, 'fit for the mast of some great ammiral.'

The Wood Warbler arrives at periods varying from the latter end of April to the early part of May. The males precede the females by a week or ten days.

In its habits it is the reverse of shy, often admitting of a very close approach, and when engaged with its nest is very bold. It is at the same time lively and restless, and its



WOOD WARBLER.

movements are quick, dexterous, and facile in gliding over and among the branches in quest of its prey. It is lonely and unsociable as to any intercourse with its fellows. It frequents trees for the most part, even those of large size.

Its flight is rapid and undulating.

Their food is composed of insects and their larvæ, the former being sometimes captured on the wing, and both sought for as well among the branches and foliage of trees. Mr. Weir has seen one dart against a large humble bee with an audible blow, and the insect having fallen towards the ground, repeat the attack.

The song, uttered from a twig, or the very top of the tallest tree, is, though simple, very sweet and beautiful. It is at first rather slow, but afterwards becomes more hurried, and is accompanied by a curious shaking of the wings, and a slight upward movement of the tail: when the bird first arrives, it is kept up nearly throughout the day. It resembles the syllables 'twee, twee, twee,' and is continued at intervals till about the middle of September, the time of its leaving. It may be heard a very long way off. 'It seems not without considerable exertion that these sounds are uttered, as the little singer may be seen with its throat inflated, the feathers of the head and neck erect, the wings drooping, and the little beak directed upwards and vibrating with the jarring expression of the notes thus disengaged.' The note is sometimes uttered while the bird is on the wing from place to place, as also when descending from the spray to which it had arisen. They have also a sibilous trill, from whence one of the specific names—a 'tzit, tzit;' and during the time they are engaged with their young, when the song is intermitted, a dull and plaining sort of call—a mournful 'tweet.'

The nest, which is domed, and of an oval shape, cleverly, but not thickly, interwoven, is almost always placed on the ground, among herbage in woods, the entrance being through a small hole in the side. It is made of grasses, leaves, and moss, lined with the finer parts of the first and hair. It is well concealed, and is usually to be found on the side of some slope, where the sun's rays gaining transitory admittance through the boughs above encourage the vegetation, and dispel the dank and humid atmosphere which otherwise would prevail in such a place. Mr. Sweet says that he has often found the nest on the stump of a tree.

The eggs, six, or more commonly seven in number, are of a white ground colour, thickly spotted and speckled all over with dark purple, red, and grey, forming a mass at the larger end. Some are, however, much less marked than others.

Male; length, five inches and nearly a quarter; bill, blackish brown, but lighter in colour along the edges, the upper mandible the darkest, the lower one more of a brownish yellow, the inside of the mouth is orange yellow; a streak of bright yellow passes from the base of the lower mandible over the eye; under it, before and behind the eye is a brown line. Iris, rich dark brown, eyelids, pale yellow; head on the sides, yellow, tinged with brown and green; on the crown, neck on the back, and nape, olive green, tinged with yellow, Chin, throat, and breast, yellow, the latter on the lower part white; back, olive green, tinged with yellow.

The wings, when closed, reach over three-fourths of the length of the tail, extending to the width of eight inches and three quarters; the first feather is short, the third the longest in the wing; underneath the wings are grey; greater and lesser wing coverts, greyish brown, edged on the outside webs with yellowish green. Primaries and secondaries, greyish brown, each feather with a narrow outer edge of bright yellowish green, excepting the two first, with faint brownish white; tertiaries, greyish brown, with a broader edge of yellowish white; greater aad lesser under wing coverts, greyish brown, margined with pale yellow. The tail, greyish brown, the outer edges of the feathers yellow, excepting the side ones, which are edged with pale brown; the middle pair are rather shorter than the others, making it slightly forked; underneath it is grey; upper tail coverts, olive green, and very long; under tail coverts, white, also very long. Legs toes, and claws, brown.

The female closely resembles the male, both in size and appearance, but the dark eye streak is not so distinctly defined.

As the season advances, the yellow edgings of the wings and tail gradually disappear, and the breast becomes of a purer white.

The young, which are completely fledged at the end of June, or beginning of July, when fully grown, resemble their parents in appearance, but the colours are less distinct, and of a lighter tint. Their moult does not take place during their stay in this country.

Mr. Macgillivray says, 'I have not observed any other variations than those dependant upon the wearing of the plumage, and the fading of the tints. The above descriptions are from individuals in perfect plumage, not in the smallest degree worn, obtained in May. Many individuals arrive in that state, and must therefore have moulted in their winter residence, while in others the quills and tail are more or less worn. Towards the end of summer, the colour of the upper parts of the male is yellowish brown, tinged with grey; the wings and tail, wood-brown; the lower parts nearly pure white. By the middle of June the female is of a nearly uniform greyish brown above, and the yellow on the fore neck is almost obliterated. The new plumage is completed by the end of September.'

This species was first noticed as a British one by Mr. Lamb, in the 'Linnæan Transactions.'

WILLOW WARBLER.

YELLOW WARBLER. WILLOW WREN. HUCK-MUCK.

Sylvia trochilus,	PENNANT. SELBY. JENYNS.
Motacilla trochilus,	MONTAGU. LINNÆUS.
" *acredula,*	LINNÆUS.
Regulus trochilus,	FLEMING.

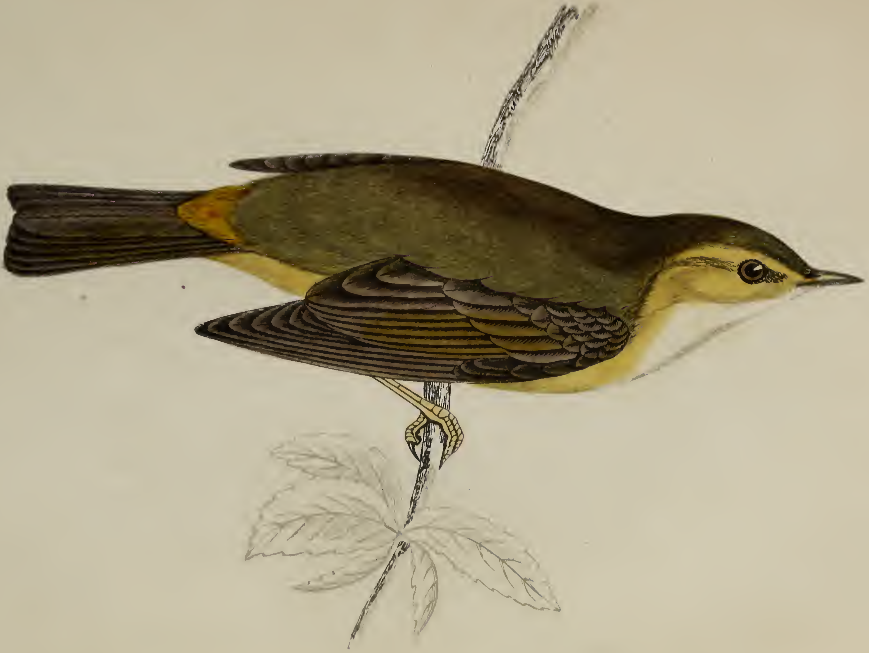
Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Trochilus*—'A little bird called a Wren.'

In Europe, the bird before us is common in Spain, France, and Italy, and also visits Russia, Norway, and its islands even within the arctic circle, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and other parts. In Asia it has also been observed in Persia, by my friend Mr. Strickland, and Mr. Gould has received specimens from India. Meyer says that it is common also in North America.

In this country it is plentiful in the southern and eastern counties—Kent, Sussex, Hants., Wilts., Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Derbyshire, Durham, and Northumberland: in Cornwall it is rare. In Yorkshire it is very abundant near Sowerby and Thirsk, as Edward D. Swarbreck, Esq. informs me.

It occurs also in Scotland, even in the extremity of the mainland, plentifully in Sutherlandshire, about Tongue and Loch Assynt, Laing and Loch Naver, Leith Water, Currie, Slateford, Edinburgh, and the Pentland Hills. In Ireland also, throughout the island, even in the extreme west, from south to north—from Kerry to Donegal.

In Orkney it is noted as having been observed at Clestron, in Orphir, during spring; it appeared in the neighbourhood of Ellsness, in April, 1825; and one was killed by Mr. Strang, May 20th., 1839. Another was seen in a plantation at Muddisdale, near Kirkwall, June 2nd., 1847.



WILLOW WARBLER.

This bird frequents the hedges of meadows, especially those, if there be any such now left, that have not been laid low by the pruner's hook, and that both on hill and plain alike, as also the borders of streams, the nurseries of the alder, the hazel, the birch, and the withy, orchards, woods, brakes, plantations, thickets, furze covers, gardens, brambles, bushes, and trees, seeming to have a preference for osiers and willows, and hence its name. It is pleasant indeed to watch it in the autumn, when the greater numbers are to be seen, gliding and shifting about among the branches of fruit trees and bushes, now hopping here, now frisking there, as if seeming to think that its diminutive size or conscious innocence was a guarantee for its safe security from molestation or injury. The female shews great attachment to her young, and though taken off the nest, has been known to return to it on being set at liberty.

One of our earliest sylvan visitants, its arrival in this country is generally the second week in April, but sometimes so soon as the end of March, and its departure the second week in September, or the beginning of October: Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, has heard it sing on the 24th. of the former month, as also so late as the 10th. of the latter. In Scotland it does not arrive till the third or last week in September. They would seem to come over in small flocks: the males before the females.

This species also is easily tamed and reconciled to captivity. Mr. Hewitson mentions one which he captured at night, and which in the morning shewed no wish to fly away, but hopped about on the table, picking up the flies which he placed for its breakfast. Another, taken from the nest and placed in a cage, immediately began to eat the insects offered to her. The Willow Wren is very lively, brisk, and vigorous in all its habits and actions, moving and flitting from branch to branch in search of its food; it is of a pugnacious character, and even the young, when foraging for themselves in the autumn, will drive away other birds that intrude upon their neighbourhood. A curious instance is recorded in the 'Field Naturalist' by a lady, of a nest which she accidentally disturbed and took up, being still proceeded with, and two eggs laid, and though it was again disturbed and almost ruined, and the eggs displaced by a flock of Ducks, on her placing them in it again and restoring it to something like its proper form, another egg was laid the same day, and four more the next week. On these the bird sat, and brought out seven young ones. When engaged with its young the Willow Wren suffers a rather near approach, moving about the brambles near its nest with evident and restless anxiety. They begin to build about a fortnight or three weeks after their arrival.

It flies with rapidity, and in an undulating manner, but only ordinarily for a short distance; at times it betakes itself to the ground, where it is equally quick and nimble in its movements.

The food of the Willow Warbler consists of flies, even of large size, gnats, spiders, aphides, and other insects, and caterpillars, and for these it naturally resorts to those situations where they are in the greatest plenty—woods, plantations, copses, shrubberies, groves, and thickets, bushes on commons, gardens, and the wooded banks of the 'clear and winding river.' They are sought for within the buds and beneath the leaves, and the birds do much service by destroying the creatures which do so great an injury to rose trees and flower-beds. A snap of the bill may often be heard when an insect is captured on the wing.

Its song, though of not much variety, is plaintive, mellow, soft, and pleasing, and is both uttered at times on the wing as well as from some high tree. It consists, says Mr. Macgillivray, of a repetition of the syllable 'twee,' ten or more times, the first notes prolonged, the rest gradually falling and becoming shorter. It may be heard at a distance of as much as six hundred yards or more, and is continued till the middle or end of July, after which time it begins to wane in strength, though repeated in fine weather till the last. It begins with the highest note, and gradually goes lower, dwelling on each several tones, in all five whole notes of music. It is wont also, particularly in the early summer months, to emit a small and rather shrill cheep. When warbling its sweet and melodious lay, the throat is somewhat swelled out, and the whole body thrills with the effort. In the autumn it is so low and subdued that it is almost inaudible—a gentle adieu on the eve of its departure, before the inhospitable northern winter steals on. The note of the young birds is still weaker than that of the old ones.

The nest, which is very large for the size of the bird, of an oval but rather flat shape, though it varies in form probably according to the situation in which it is placed, is built of moss, leaves, or fern, and grass, a hollow being left in the side for the ingress and egress of the bird. It is lined with feathers, and with hair, the former being the innermost, and is pretty firmly compacted. It is placed on the ground, generally in woods, or among the long grass, brushwood, or weeds on the bank of some wooded hedge by the outside of a wood, or the edge of a pathway or open place in such. One has been met with in the ivy on a wall, and another in a field, several yards from the fence. The nest is carefully concealed.

The eggs, of a rotund form, but varying much in size and marks, are from four to six or seven in number, and mostly light pinkish white, with numerous small specks of pale rusty red; some are less thoroughly spotted, and some most marked at the larger end, while others are only sparingly dotted; they are a little polished: pure white ones have been met with. The female bird sits very close upon them, and the male feeds her on the nest, she chattering to him the while, and he to her, and sometimes takes her place in the course of the day, while she searches for food.

The young are hatched the end of May or beginning of June, and are fledged about the middle or end of that month, or the beginning of July. A second brood, if reared, is abroad by the beginning of August.

Male; weight, about two drachms and three quarters; length, five inches; bill, dusky brown; the under mandible pale yellowish brown at the base, its edges dusky orange; those of the upper one paler; iris, dusky brown; over it is a light-coloured yellow streak, fading off backwards into white; under the eye is also an obscure yellow streak: the yellow colours fade with the advance of summer. Head on the sides, pale olive colour, or greenish grey, with a tinge of yellow; on the crown, neck on the back, and nape, dull olive green; the neck on the sides is pale olivaceous, or greenish grey, tinged with yellow; chin and throat, greyish white, streaked with yellow; the latter fades with the advance of summer; breast, silvery white, with a strong tinge of yellow, which fades towards the autumn; below, the latter is nearly white, but tinged with yellow; back, dull pale olive green, fading into greyish brown later in the summer.

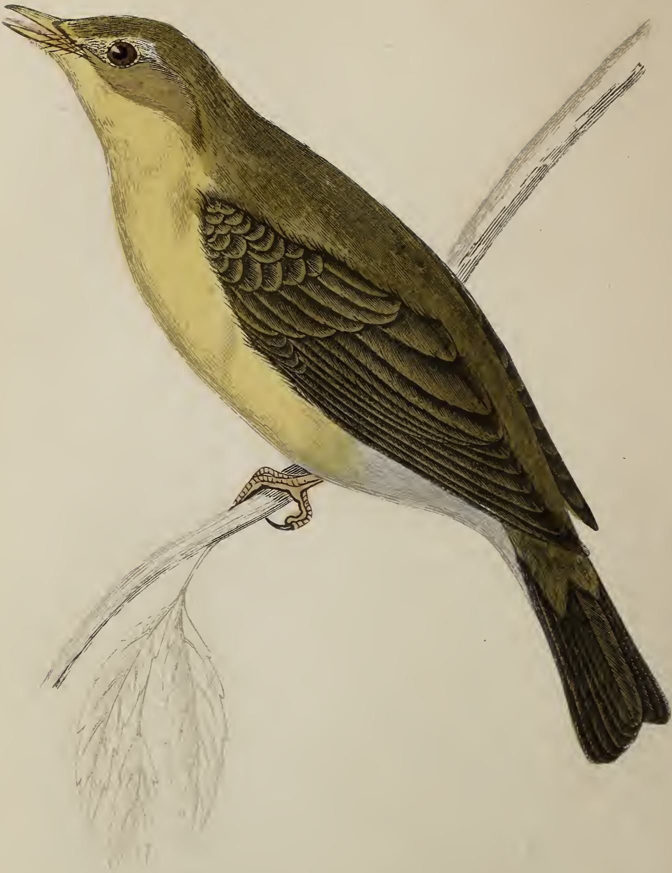
The wings, which expand to the width of seven inches and three quarters, have the first quill feather very short, being only three quarters of an inch long, the second slightly longer than the sixth, but not so long as the fifth, the third, fourth, and fifth nearly equal in length, and the longest in the wing; the quills nineteen in number: greater and lesser wing coverts, greyish brown, edged on the outside webs with yellowish green; primaries, excepting the two first, secondaries, and tertiaries, darker brown, edged with yellowish green, the latter the most so; greater and lesser under wing coverts, bright yellow, some of the feathers extending over the outer edge. The tail, which is rather long, and of a greyish brown colour, the feathers edged extensively with yellowish green, has the two middle feathers slightly shorter than the other ones; underneath, it is greyish brown; it reaches an inch beyond the end of the wings; upper tail coverts, dull olive green; under tail coverts, whitish, strongly tinged with yellow. The legs are very slender and delicate, and, as the toes, light yellowish brown; claws, brown.

The female is a little larger than the male, and her colours are not so bright; length, a little over five inches; the wings extend to the width of about eight inches.

The young bird at first resembles the parent; after the autumnal moult the whole of plumage of the under parts becomes more yellow than in the old birds.

The moult takes place as soon as the young are dismissed, and the new plumage is perfect by the middle of September.

Mr. Macgillivray says, 'I have not observed any other remarkable variations than those connected with the periodical change of plumage. The above descriptions refer to individuals having their feathers perfect. When these birds arrive in this country in April, the old individuals have their plumage considerably worn, in consequence of which the yellowish green edgings are diminished, and the yellow tints more or less obliterated. At the same period, individuals are met with having the plumage in all respects perfect, and of a much brighter colour. They most probably are young birds reared in the southern regions during the absence of the species, or at least young birds of the previous year, which have been long in moulting. As the season advances the upper parts become of a nearly uniform greyish brown; the yellow tints fade, so that the line over the eye becomes nearly white, as does the greater part of the lower surface.'



MELODIOUS WILLOW WARBLER.

MELODIOUS WILLOW WARBLER.

MELODIOUS WILLOW WREN.

Sylvia hippolais, TEMMINCK.

Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Hippolais*—...........

THE Melodious Willow Warbler appears to be dispersed throughout the greater part of the European continent, being found from the shores of the Mediterranean to Sweden.

F. Plomley, Esq., M. D., F. L. S., of Maidstone, in Kent, recorded in the 'Zoologist,' pages 2238-9, the first occurrence of this bird in Britain, but only a 'flying visit;' one having been obtained at Eythorne, near Dover, in that county, on the 15th. of June, 1843. It came into the possession of Mr. Chaffey, of Dodington, also in Kent who obligingly drew my attention to it when I saw his excellently preserved collection.

'It is somewhat singular,' says Mr. Gould, writing before the occurrence of the above named specimen, 'that this species, so familiar to every naturalist on the continent, and which inhabits the gardens and hedgerows of those portions of the coasts of France and Holland which are immediately opposite our own, should not, like the rest of its immediate congeners, more diminutive in size, and consequently less capable of performing extensive flights, have occasionally strayed across the Channel, and enlivened our glens and groves with its rich and charming song, which is far superior to that of either of the three other species of the group.'

'Its food consists of insects, such as aphides, and other small kinds to which are added caterpillars, etc.'

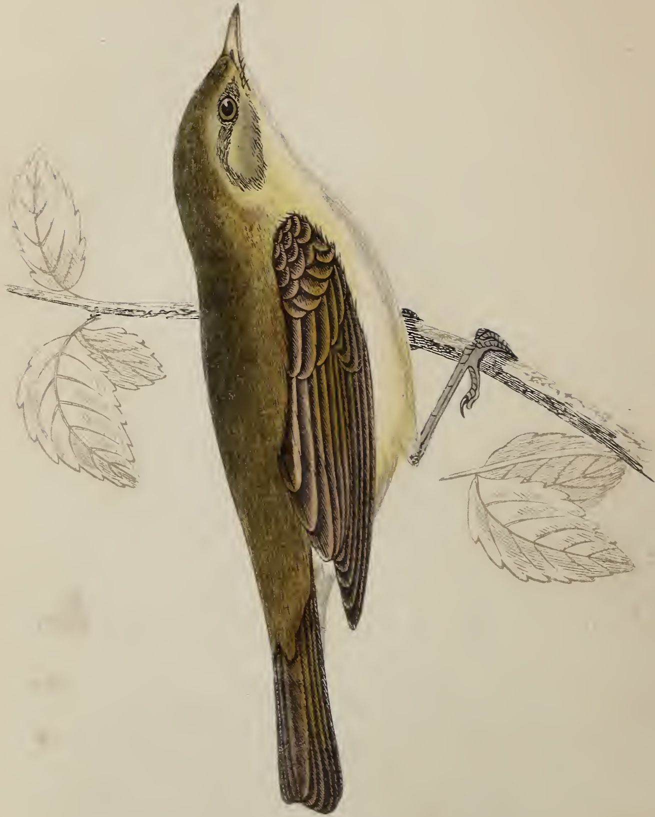
'Those who have not had an opportunity of listening to the song of this little tenant of the grove, can scarcely form an idea of its power and melody, in which respects it is only equalled by those of the Blackcap and Nightingale.'

Mr. Gould also mentions that it builds on trees, as well as at times in shrubs in gardens.

The eggs are five in number, of a reddish white colour, blotted with spots of darker red.

Male; bill, yellowish brown; between it and the eye is a small patch of yellow; iris, dark brown; head on the crown, neck on the back, and nape, greenish ash-colour; throat and breast, pale yellow; back, greenish ash-colour. Primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brown, the edge of each feather being lighter; tail, brown, the edges of each feather lighter. Legs and toes, yellowish brown.

W. F. Wratislaw Bird, Esq., to whom this work is much indebted for valuable information and assistance, always accorded in the most ready, handsome, and courteous manner, and in the true spirit of the love of science, has forwarded a foreign skin of this species, from which the plate has been coloured.



CHIFF CHAFF.

LESSER PETTYCHAPS. LEAST WILLOW WREN.

Sylvia rufa,	TEMMINCK.
Motacilla hippolais,	MONTAGU.
Sylvia hippolais,	LATHAM. JENYNS. SELBY.

***Sylvia.* *Sylva*—A** wood. *Hippolais*—'A bird called the Hedge Sparrow.'

THIS diminutive bird extends in its European range as far as Norway in the summer, remaining through the winter in some of the southern parts of the Continent. It is common in France, Germany, and Italy, and especially in Holland, and has been observed also in Asia Minor. Specimens killed in the more southern parts are said to have the yellow tints much more brilliant than those obtained farther north.

It is met with throughout England, from Sussex, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Derbyshire, and Worcestershire, to Cornwall, Westmoreland, Durham, and Northumberland. In Yorkshire it is common enough in most parts, but appears to be rather scarce in the neighbourhood of Halifax, Huddersfield, and Hebden Bridge. Near Falmouth it is uncommon: Mr. May shot one on the 12th. of December, 1849, and on the 22nd. of the same month another was killed at Swanpool, by Mr. Williams, and several were seen near Penzance in February, 1852. In Devonshire it is very common.

It has been noticed also in various parts of Scotland, especially in the Lothians: in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh Mr. Macgillivray says it is very rare.

It occasionally visits Orkney during summer, but is not known to breed there: one was killed in Sanday, by William Strang, Esq., in November, 1850.

It occurs in Wales also, and in Ireland in certain localities from north to south; in a few places near Belfast, in the counties of Down and Antrim, and near Cushendall, to the north of the latter; and in the park of Shane's Castle, about Bryansford, and Rostrevor, in the former; in the county of Dublin, at Glasnevin and the Phœnix Park; near Clonmel, Clogheen, and Waterford; Castle Warren and Glengariff, in the county of Cork; and has once been obtained near Tralee, in Kerry.

It inhabits groves, woods, coppices, beds of reeds, gardens, the sides of small streams where trees grow, such as, in the latter situations, the alder and the aspen, and in the former the oak, the fir, and the birch. Among these it may be seen in the early vernal season, in sheltered places, searching among the boughs and branches for its food, and emitting at intervals its shrill note.

This is one of the earliest of our summer, or rather of our spring visitants, arriving here the end of March, or the beginning of April. Some have been seen, by Montagu, so early as the 12th. and the 14th. of the former month, and several by the 20th. He also once saw one about Christmas, in 1802: near Swansea it has been heard on the 30th. of January. In Devonshire it arrived in the year 1851 on March 21st., 1848 on March 23rd., and in 1849 on March 13th., and commonly is seen or heard from the 25th. to the 29th.; one was shot near Torquay on the 10th. of January, 1851. In Kent it has been known on the 24th., in the year 1851, and in Bedfordshire by George B. Clarke, Esq., on the 22nd. of that month, in 1852. In Oxfordshire on the 25th., by the Revs. A. and H. Matthews, and in Yorkshire on the banks of the Don, near Sproitborough, the seat of Sir Joseph Copley, Bart., by Peter Inchbald, Esq. It leaves us also late, not till the beginning of October, giving us a longer stay than most others; some few however have been known to remain in the southern counties, having been met with at all seasons of the year; and Mr. Macgillivray had one, killed near Newhaven, in January, 1835. It is somewhat uncertain in its appearance, many appearing in one year, while not an individual is to be seen the next. It is very possible that those individuals which have been noticed at so early a date in the year have remained in this country through the winter. In Ireland, its earliest recorded arrival is the 3rd. of April, and on the 7th. of that month it was seen in 1838 and 1844, and not till the 15th. in 1847; a year in which the vernal migrants were very late in making their appearance. One was heard on the 8th. of September.

In the spring these birds keep for the most part in the same haunt. They are lively, active, and restless in their movements, often frequenting trees of lofty growth, especially in situations where they are surrounded with tangled vegetation. They display much anxiety for the safety of their young; if the latter be taken out of the nest, it is said that the old birds will hover about, and even come and stand beside and flutter around them. They are easily captured, and soon become tame in confinement. Mr. Sweet mentions one which used to perch on the hand without shewing the least symptom of fear, and also would fly up to the ceiling, and bring down a fly in its beak every time.

Their food consists of small caterpillars, aphides, small moths, and flies; and the latter they sometimes catch on the wing: the young are fed with caterpillars, flies, and other insects.

The song, frequently heard overhead from the upper part of some tall tree, and on one occasion so early as the 5th. of February, is melodious and varied. The ordinary bitone note is a mere 'cheep, cheep, cheep, chee,' likened by some to the syllables 'chiff-chaff,' whence the name, and a 'chiff, cheff, chaff,' almost a 'vox et præterea nihil,' but it comes from the tops of the trees with a ringing sound, reminding one of the faint chime of the distant village church bell; it is continued even till late in September. The alarm cry Meyer represents by the word 'hoo-id;' the note is also frequently repeated on the wing.

The nest, which is arched over, is skilfully constructed of various indiscriminate materials, according to the situation it is placed in, fern, moss, leaves, grasses, the bark of the birch tree, the shells of chrysalides, wool, and the down of flowers, with sometimes feathers and a few hairs for lining for the whole of the interior; it is arched over more than half-way, the other portion of the upper half being left open by the side; if the roofing be removed, even three or four times, the patient little architect will renew it. It is placed on the ground, generally, but not always, in the immediate neighbourhood of trees, or on a hedge bank, or near a brook, or on the moss-clad stump of a tree, beneath the shelter of the trailing boughs of some bramble, furze, or other bush, or clod of earth. Mr. Henry Doubleday has found one at a height of two feet from the ground, in some fern; and Mr. Hewitson mentions another, which was built in some ivy against a garden wall, at a like elevation. Occasionally the nest is placed in a row of peas, or a bed of ground-growing wild plants.

The eggs, usually seven in number, are more than ordinarily rounded at the larger end, and pointed at the smaller. They are hatched in thirteen days: they do not vary much, and are of a white ground colour, with very small dots and spots of blackish red or purple brown, chiefly at the thicker end, which they sometimes surround in the way of a zone or a belt. Mr. Neville Wood saw a nest which contained five eggs of the usual colour, and the sixth pure white. The shell is very thin, and but little polished. The eggs are laid towards the middle or end of May, and the young birds are fledged about the middle of June: they quit the nest early.

Incubation lasts thirteen days, and the male occasionally relieves the female at her post. Two broods are sometimes reared in the season.

Male; weight, nearly three drachms; length, four inches and a half; bill, dark brown, the edges of both and the lower one at the base, pale yellowish red, the base beset with bristles; there is a pale yellowish brown mark over the eye, more or less obscure, and between the eye and the bill the space is grey: a narrow circle of the former colour surrounds the eyes; iris, dusky. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, greenish ash-colour, or brownish olive, the green almost disappearing in the building-season; chin, throat, and breast, pale dull yellowish white, the yellow colour chiefly in indistinct streaks, and also nearly disappearing in the building-time; back, greenish ash-colour, or brownish olive, the edges of the feathers paler than the remainder.

The wings, which extend to the width of six inches, have the first quill short, the second a quarter of an inch shorter than the third, which is of the same length as the fifth, and rather longer than the fourth, the former two being the longest in the wing, and the seventh a little longer than the second, which in some specimens does not exceed even the eighth; the under surface of the wings is grey; greater and lesser wing coverts, also greenish ash-colour or brownish olive, duller in the summer; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, rather darker brown, the edges of the last-named rather lighter; greater and lesser under wing coverts, pale yellow. The tail, which is rather long, is blackish grey, the feathers bordered with olive green; the side feathers have whitish edges, and are a little longer than the middle ones, beneath it is grey; upper tail coverts, brownish olive; under tail coverts, pale dull brownish white, tinged with yellow. Legs and toes, dark brown, the soles of the latter yellowish; claws, lighter.

The female cannot be distinguished in appearance from the male.

The young, in their nestling plumage, are greenish brown above, and dull yellowish white on the breast, and nearly resemble the adult, but the yellow and green tints are somewhat brighter, the bill, legs, and toes paler in colour.

DARTFORD WARBLER.

FURZE WREN.

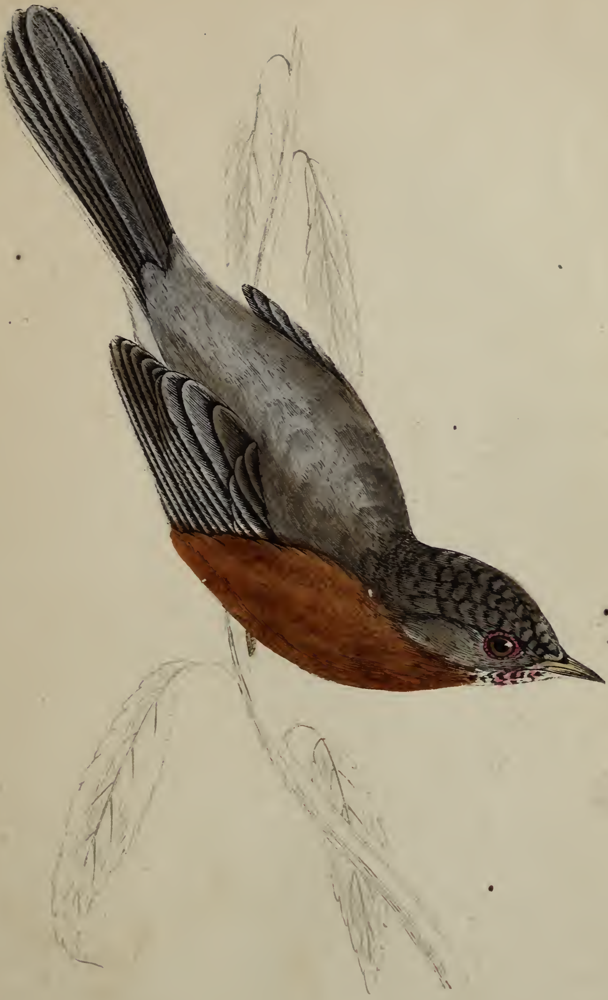
Sylvia provincialis,	SCHLEGEL.
" *dartfordiensis,*	LATHAM.
Motacilla provincialis,	GMELIN.
Melizophilus provincialis,	SELBY.
Curruca provincialis,	FLEMING.

Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Provincialis*—Provincial.

IN Spain, Italy, and the south of France this species is met with.

The earliest specimen noticed in Britain was obtained on Bexley Heath, near Dartford in Kent, in April, 1773, and it thence derived its Anglican name. The circumstance was first made known by Dr. Latham, and Pennant recorded it in the 'British Zoology' published in 1776. Since then the bird has been repeatedly met with in various parts of the south of England, occurring on most of the furze-clad commons of Kent, Surrey, and Middlesex; at Blackheath, Barnes Common, Burwood Common, St. George's Hill, Wimbledon Common, Wandsworth Common, Godalming, and Shooter's Hill; in Devonshire, near Teignmouth, Kingsbridge, and to the north of Exeter; Truro, Falmouth, and Penzance, in Cornwall; Alton and Andover, in Hampshire; in Worcestershire; Melton Mowbray, in Leicestershire; the Downs near Lewes, Sussex, in September, 1850; and near Chichester, as A. Fuller, Esq., of Broyle House, informs me—one in 1852, and five previously. A few have been known to breed on Cannock Chace, Rugeley, Staffordshire, by R. W. Hawkins, Esq.; and one has occurred on the Denes near Yarmouth, Norfolk.

The Dartford Warbler is exclusively confined to heaths and commons, the rough cover of such affording it the security that it desires.



DARTFORD WARBLER

These birds appear, 'sans doute,' to live with us throughout the year, being seen even in mid-winter, as well as in the summer.

In their habits they are very shy, concealing themselves, on being approached, in the cover on the open downs and waste places where they dwell, into which they creep in a quiet but secure manner. They prefer those places where the furze is very thick, and also frequent thorn bushes. They are capable of being kept in confinement, and are exceedingly active in all their movements, assuming a great variety of attitudes. They shew much anxiety for the safety of their young, using every art to allure intruders from the spot, almost suffering themselves to be touched before they move away.

They fly with a short jerk, confining, for the most part, their movements to the bushes, to which they attach themselves.

Their food consists of flies, grasshoppers and other insects, and the former of these are captured on the wing, sallied after from time to time from the tops of bushes, the station being again resumed. In confinement they are also frugiferous.

The note, which has been heard so early as the end of February, in the year 1830, is described as weak and shrill, but often repeated, either when the bird is perched on some topmost or outside twig, or when hovering over the bush; it is sometimes continued for half an hour at a time. The bird has also a common 'cha, cha, cha,' or 'tscha, tscha, tscha.'

The nest, which is slight in its make, is placed in a furze bush, to the stems of which it is attached, at a height of about two feet from the ground. It is built of dry stalks and grass, mixed with bits of the gorse; the materials are apparently but loosely put together, though in reality firmly compacted, and have a slight interweaving of wool.

The eggs are of a whitish grey ground colour, slightly tinged with green, speckled all over with olive brown and ash-colour; towards the larger end the markings are more run together, and form a sort of zone.

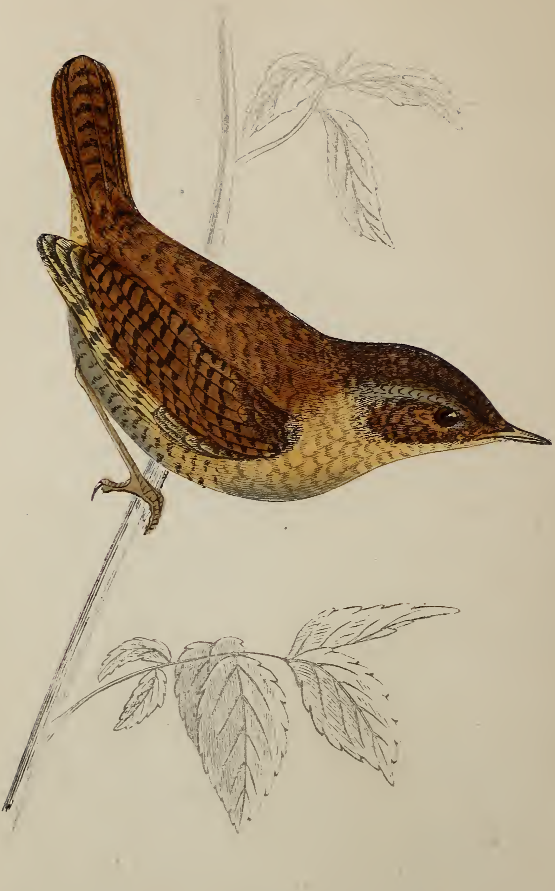
Two broods appear to be reared in the year; for Montagu found the nest and eggs after the middle of July, and saw another pair of birds at the same time which had a nest near, the earlier brood being hatched early in May.

Male; length, five inches or a little over; bill, slender, and nearly black, particularly towards the point; the edges of the upper mandible are reddish yellow, as is the base of the lower one; iris, reddish yellow. Head on the sides and crown, neck on the back and nape, blackish grey; the chin, which is streaked with whitish, throat, breast, and sides, reddish brown or light reddish purple; on the lower part the breast is nearly white, back, blackish grey or brown, partly tinged with olive, the feathers somewhat hair-like.

The wings, which are very short, have the first quill feather the smallest, the second of the same length as the seventh, the third and the sixth equal, the fourth and fifth also equal, and the longest; underneath, the wings are purple grey; greater and lesser wing coverts, blackish brown, edged with grey; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, blackish brown edged with grey or rusty olive-colour. The tail, which is long, extending two inches beyond the closed wings, and cuneiform or wedge-shaped, is blackish brown, the side feathers, which are nearly half an inch shorter than the middle ones, tipped and margined with greyish white; underneath, it is purple grey; upper tail coverts, greyish black; under tail coverts, reddish purple grey. Legs and toes, light reddish brown; claws, dusky.

The female resembles the male, but is more tinged with light brown on the upper parts, and on the lower is of a lighter rufous; the throat is more streaked with whitish.

The young are similarly marked; the eye is yellowish.



WREN.

WREN.

COMMON WREN. KITTY WREN. JIMPO.

Sylvia troglodytes,	PENNANT.
Motacilla troglodytes,	MONTAGU. BEWICK.
Troglodytes vulgaris,	TEMMINCK.
" *europæus,*	CUVIER.

Sylvia. Sylva—A wood. *Troglodytes*—The name of an ancient race of people, said to live in holes and caves.

RICHARD DOWDEN, ESQ., Mayor of Cork in the year 1845, will doubtless be rather surprised at seeing, if, which is perhaps rather problematical, he ever should see, his name at the head of an article in this 'History of British Birds,' but I place it there to do him all due honour for having issued a proclamation during his mayoralty to forbid, on the score of cruelty, the hunting of this little bird on St. Stephen's Day by all the idle fellows of the country. There are different traditions as to the origin of this absurd custom,—one dating from the time of the incursions of the Danes, when it is said that a Wren perched on a drum, and there sang so loud as to awaken the enemy, who would otherwise have been slaughtered in their sleep, and the other from such a recent date as the reign of William III., when it is said that the noise of Wrens picking up the crumbs on a drum-head, in like manner saved his army from being cut off early in the morning by James II.; the result being to make these birds ever since objects of detestation to the Jacobites, and of favour with the Orangemen It is however manifest that these traditions cannot both be true, and I shall therefore take the liberty of not believing either of them. Suffice it to say that on the Saint's day in question, the 'Wren Boys' go about the hedges pelting the unfortunate victim with sticks and stones, and carry it about when caught, on the top of a pole in the midst of holly or ivy, singing some doggrel verses, which begin with

'The Wren, the Wren, the king of all birds,
St. Stephen's day was caught in the furze;
We hunted him up, we hunted him down,
We hunted him all about the town.' etc., etc.

The whole being an excuse for begging, and its consequent debauchery.

Take the following for a contrast, from an American paper, whose editor I must likewise do honour to by naming it—the 'Clinton Courant,' though I cannot him, for the following right-minded sentiment so well put:—

'Leaning idly over a fence a few days since, we noticed a little four-year-old 'Lord of the creation' amusing himself in the grass, by watching the frolicsome flight of birds which were playing around him. At length a beautiful Bob-o-link perched himself upon the drooping bough of an apple-tree, which extended to within a few yards of the place where the urchin sat, and maintained his position apparently unconscious of the close proximity of one whom birds usually consider a dangerous neighbour. The boy seemed astonished at his impudence, and after regarding him steadily for a minute or two, obeying the instinct of his baser part, he picked up a stone lying at his feet, and was preparing to throw it, steadying himself carefully for a good aim. The little arm was reached backward without alarming the bird, and Bob was within an ace of damage; when lo! his throat swelled, and forth came nature's plea:—'A link—a link—a l-i-n-k, Bob-o-link—Bob-o-link!—a-no-weet—a-no-weet! I know it—I know it!—a link—a link—a link—don't throw it!—throw it!—throw it!—throw it!' etc.;—and he didn't. Slowly the little arm subsided to its natural position, and the despised stone dropped. The minstrel charmed the murderer! We heard the songster through, and watched his unharmed flight, as did the boy with a sorrowful countenance. Anxious to hear an expression of the little fellow's feeling, we approached him and enquired, 'Why didn't you stone him, my boy? you might have killed him and carried him home.' The poor little fellow looked up doubtingly, as though he suspected our meaning, and with an expression, half shame and half sorrow, he replied, 'Could n't! cos he sung so!' Who will say that our nature is wholly depraved after that, or aver that music hath no charms to soothe the savage breast? Melody awakened humanity, and humanity—mercy; the angels who sang at the creation whispered to the child's heart. The bird was saved, and God was glorified by the deed. Dear little boys! do n't stone the birds.'

The Wren is found in Europe as far north as Sweden, the Ferroe Islands, Iceland, and 'Greenland's icy mountains,' as also in the other direction in Spain and Italy.

In Asia it has also been noticed, namely, in Asia Minor, by my friend Mr. Hugh E. Strickland.

In England it is a universal favourite, and plentiful in most districts. In Yorkshire it is said to be less common near Halifax than in other parts. It is known likewise throughout Ireland, Scotland, Shetland, and most parts of Orkney.

It remains with us throughout the year, braving the rigour of the northern winter, and generally without harm; in severe seasons, however, if the snow be deep on the ground, not a few perish.

The Wren is one of our best known and most familiar birds, frequenting not only lanes and hedges, but gardens close to houses, and sheltering itself in the neighbouring and often ivy-clad outbuildings, several at times roosting together, and frequently in the old nest, for warmth's sake, in such places or among heaps of stones, or the hollows in the roots of old and decayed trees, in the cold and frosty winter nights. They make, says William Ogilby, Esq., a prodigious chattering and bustle before finally settling down for the night, as if contending which shall get into the warmest and most comfortable place, and frequently come to the mouth of the hole to see that they are unobserved. They may be the family of the preceding year, and if so it would shew that the bond of social union continues unbroken till the following spring.

They often suffer a near approach, but nevertheless are easily alarmed, and then quickly steal back into the concealment which is most congenial to them, or fly away to some short distance, and then again seek the friendly shelter of the hedge or bush, and retire into their pristine obscurity. These birds may be kept in confinement. They too shew anxiety about their young, and the Rev. W. D. Fox communicated to Mr. Hewitson an account of one which would suffer its nest to be taken in the hand and examined, remaining the while quietly seated on its eggs. C. Conway, Esq. writes in the 'Magazine of Natural History,' volume viii. page 547, of one to which he was attracted by its loud vociferations, which he found to be caused by the proximity of a Weasel, its nest doubtless being near. They are somewhat pugnacious, and have been observed fighting together with much animosity. In the daytime they may be seen with erect tail, now here, now there, creeping like a mouse among the branches. They are fond of seclusion, and are of solitary habits, being never seen in flocks, and seldom but in the spring in pairs, and choosing sombre, quiet, and lonely places for their tenantship.

Their flight, usually short and near the ground, is performed in a straight line, with repeated fluttering of the wings.

The young are assiduously attended to by the parent birds, and fed with insects and their larvæ and worms, the same that they themselves feed on; these, however, are not their exclusive food, for they make free with currants in the season.

The note, which is heard throughout the greater part of the year, but is not so powerful in the winter months, is very lively, clear, and cheerful, and while uttering it the whole body vibrates with the effort, the bill is raised and opened wide, the throat swelled out, and the wings drooped. It is generally given forth from the upper branch of a hedge or bush, and when it is ended the singer descends from her place in the orchestra quite 'à la mode.' I was sitting in my breakfast-room one morning, when I heard a loud, clear, ringing note in the garden, whose authorship I could not divine, nor, on going out to endeavour to do so, detect. The following morning I heard it again, and this time was more fortunate. It was that of a Wren! There he or she the 'cantatrice' stood, pouring forth a volume of song enough almost to make the very welkin echo it. I was never more astonished at anything of the kind, it was so utterly disproportionate to the size of the tiny bird. William Thompson, Esq. too says, 'On the yard wall before my window in the country, a Wren once appeared on the 23rd. of September singing with such extraordinary loudness as immediately to attract other birds to the spot. First came a Hedge Sparrow to buffet it, followed by a male and female Chaffinch, also with sinister intent, but it maintained its position against them all, and sang away as fiercely as ever. A Robin too alighted beside the songster, but, unlike the others, did not seek to disturb it. For this strange proceeding on the part of the Wren there was no apparent cause.' 'When a bird of prey appears, the little Wren often gives the alarm, by uttering rapidly its note of fear, 'shrek! shrek!' so quickly repeated that it sounds like a miniature watchman's rattle; this is usually accompanied with a curtsying or dipping motion in the manner of the Redbreast.'

The nest, very large in size in proportion to the bird, and ordinarily of a spherical shape, domed over, but flattened on the side next the substance against which it is placed, varies much both in form and substance according to the nature of the locality which furnishes the materials and a 'locus standi' for it. It is commenced early in the spring, even so soon as the end of the month of March, the birds pairing in February. One found by my second son, Reginald Frank Morris, this autumn, in the beautiful grounds of Mulgrave Castle, near Whitby, the seat of Lord Normanby, was placed against the trunk of a large tree, about eight or ten feet from the ground, and was chiefly composed externally of dry leaves. Others are variously made of fern and moss, grass, small roots, twigs, and hay, closely resembling in most cases the immediate situation in which they are placed; some are lined with hair or feathers, and others not. The nest is firmly put together, especially about and below the orifice, which is strengthened with small twigs or moss, and is in the upper half and nearly closed by the feathers inside. It is in thickness from one inch to two inches, and about three inches wide within by about four in depth, and outside about five wide by six deep. At times they are found on the ground, and also in banks, as well as against trees, even so high up as twenty feet, also under the eaves of the thatch of a building, in holes in walls, the sides of stacks, among piles of wood or faggots, or the bare roots of trees, and under the projection at the top of the bank of a river; one has been known to be placed in an old bonnet fixed up among some peas to frighten the birds, and one close to a constant thoroughfare.

Mr. Hewitson mentions one built against a clover stack, and formed entirely of the clover, and so becoming part of the stack itself.

The late Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, records one adapted from a Swallow's of the preceding year, built against a rafter supporting a floor; another which did not present any appearance of a dome and was placed in the hole of a wall inside a house, the only entrance being through a broken pane of the window; and another constructed in a bunch of herbs hung up to a beam against the top of an outhouse, almost the entire nest being formed of the herbs, and the whole bunch very little larger than the nest itself. The door of this house was generally kept locked, the only mode of entrance at such times being beneath it, where there was barely room for the birds to pass through:—in all these instances the broods were reared in safety. He also mentions the circumstance of a Wren having been detected in the act of purloining materials from a Thrush's nest, which was built in a bush adjoining its own tenement, then in course of erection, the thefts being committed during the temporary absence of the owner in search of food for its young. Mr. R. Davis, Jun., of Clonmel, also communicated to him the curious fact of a family of young Wrens, which having left their own nest, and being probably in want of shelter, took possession of that of a Spotted Flycatcher, having apparently broken or thrown out all the eggs but one. Other situations for nests are the tops of honeysuckle and raspberry bushes, in the latter case the nest being made of the leaves of the tree; in fir trees, trellis-work, granaries, the branches of wall-fruit trees, and lofts, use being made occasionally of the holes previously tenanted by Sparrows and Starlings. One has been known built withinside that of a Swallow, and another in the old nest of a Thrush; one, again, in the newly-finished nest of a Martin, another on a branch of a yew tree among the foliage, and another in one of the hatches in the river at Winchester. Mr. Jesse relates a curious anecdote of a Wren's nest, the owner of which being disturbed by some children watching it, blocked up the original entrance, and opened out a new one on the other side.

Ten days or a fortnight are occupied in the construction of the tenement, a few small stems of grass supported on the rugged bark or any rough part of the tree, if placed against one, indicating its commencement, and this is subsequently built on to, till all is completed. I have been favoured with specimens by W. Robson, Esq., of Pier Head, London, and W. Bridger, Esq., and a drawing of one by the Rev. R. P. Alington.

In the eighth volume of the 'Magazine of Natural History,' a correspondent narrates that in watching a pair of Wrens building their nest, he noticed that one confined itself entirely to the construction thereof, which it never left for a moment, whilst the other was as incessantly passing and re-passing with materials for the structure. These materials, however, this helper never once attempted to put into their places;

they were always regularly delivered to the grand architect that was employed in constructing the building. Rennie says that the Wren does not 'begin at the beginning' with its nest, but first works at the outline of the whole, and afterwards encloses the sides and top, and that if it be placed under a bank, the top is begun first. The little bird often carries a piece of moss nearly as large as itself, or a straw of even greater length than itself, by which it is threatened to be overborne in its flight, and if it should chance to drop it, will pick it up again.

The eggs are usually from seven to eight in number, but generally not more than eight, though as many as a dozen, or even fourteen, have been found, of a pale reddish white colour, the former tint being transient; some are dusky white. This ground colour is sprinkled all over with small spots of dark crimson red, and these most numerous at the obtuse end; some are quite white: the shell is very thin and polished. The male feeds the female while sitting. Two broods are produced in the season. The least disturbance will cause the nest to be forsaken, and a new one built, and this again and again, if so required, until the eggs are laid; even then, if they or the young be once handled, this species will sometimes desert them. This may be the cause of tenantless nests of the Wren being so frequently found, or some interruption of the ordinary course of laying; it is, however, said that a forsaken nest will sometimes be again returned to. Thus several nests of the same year are often found near together, the work of one and the same pair of birds; and other nests, in the making of which both birds assist, are not very unfrequently put together in the autumn, and in these the birds shelter themselves in the winter, possibly as being of the newest, and therefore the best, construction, and made too late in the year for a further brood; these nests seldom, if ever, contain any feathers. The young are said to return to lodge in the nest for some time after being fledged.

As an illustration of the paper in 'The Naturalist,' volume i., page 5, by my brother, Dr. Beverley R. Morris, on the power that birds have of compressing their bodily bulk. I may mention an instance, given by Mr. Meyer in his work, of a Wren he had, which flew without seeming difficulty through the wires of a cage little more than the third of an inch asunder.

Male; weight, about two drachms and three quarters; length, about four inches or a little over; the bill is rather long, and rounded at the tip, and is slender in shape, the upper mandible dark brown, the lower paler, the tip only dark; iris, dark brown; over it is a streak of pale brown. Head on the crown, neck on the back, and nape, rusty reddish brown barred transversely with narrow streaks of dark brown; chin and throat, plain greyish dull buff, as is the breast, but darker lower down, and reddish brown on the sides; back, reddish brown, marked with transverse dusky bars.

The wings, which are much rounded, have the first feather only half as long as the second, which is of the same length as the seventh; the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth nearly equal in length, but the fourth the longest, with three or four small round white spots; greater and lesser wing coverts, also rufous, and barred; primaries, barred alternately with tawny brown and black; secondaries and tertiaries, dusky, barred on the outer webs with reddish white. The upper tail coverts, which extend over more than half the tail, have the two outer feathers shorter than the others; under tail coverts, of like length, reddish brown, indistinctly barred with darker brown, and tipped with dull white. Legs, toes, and claws, light brown.

The female is rather less in size, rather more red in colour, and the transverse bars less distinct.

Since this article was written, and while it was on its way to the press, I have received the most melancholy intelligence of the awful death on the railway, near Retford, of my dear friend whose name I have mentioned in it, Hugh Edwin Strickland. Little did I think, when I sat next to him at the dinner on the first day of the meeting of the British Association at Hull, for which we had secured the two adjoining places, that I should never see him again; as little that a letter he forwarded to me in the interim would be the last I should ever receive from him; as little when he spoke of having attended every, or nearly every previous meeting that he would never attend another; and as little when we wished one another good-bye in his lodging, where he left me writing, on the last day of the meeting, but twenty-four hours before his death, that we should never again meet in this world! Alas! that the words of Professor Sedgwick, near whose right hand he sat, and whose place in the chair he had so fitly and worthily occupied from time to time, so eloquently and feelingly, and as it were, forebodingly, uttered on the afternoon of the same day in his concluding speech, that possibly some of those then present might not meet together at the next anniversary, should so soon and so fatally be fulfilled! My departed, long valued, and ever-to-be-lamented friend lost his life literally through his devotion to science, having gone on the line to examine a geological formation; and sure I am that in every relation of life his loss will never be forgotten, as it can never be repaired. On one only other occasion in my life, when another valued friend, W. V. J. Surtees, was most unfortunately drowned at Oxford, have I ever had such a shock as the sudden account of his death. Peace to the memory of the departed. How little do we know 'what a day may bring forth!'

DALMATIAN REGULUS.

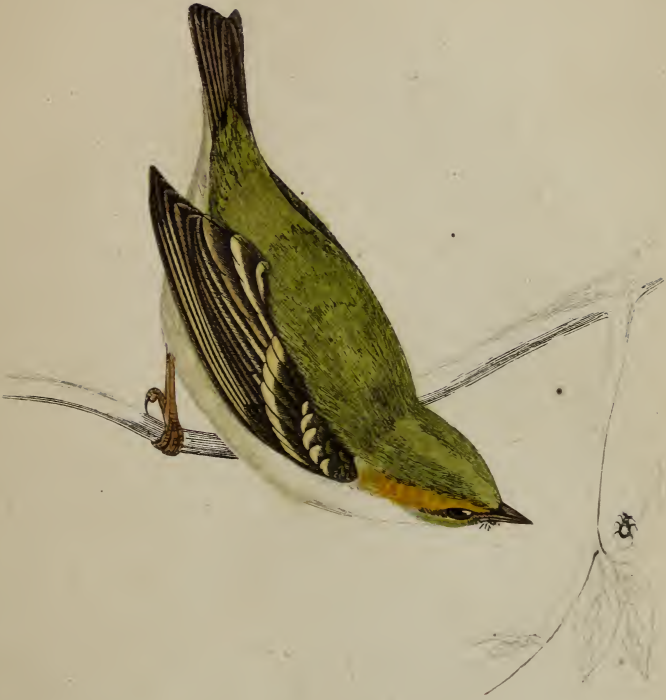
Regulus modestus, GOULD.

Regulus—A diminutive of *Rex*—a king. *Modestus*—Modest—sober.

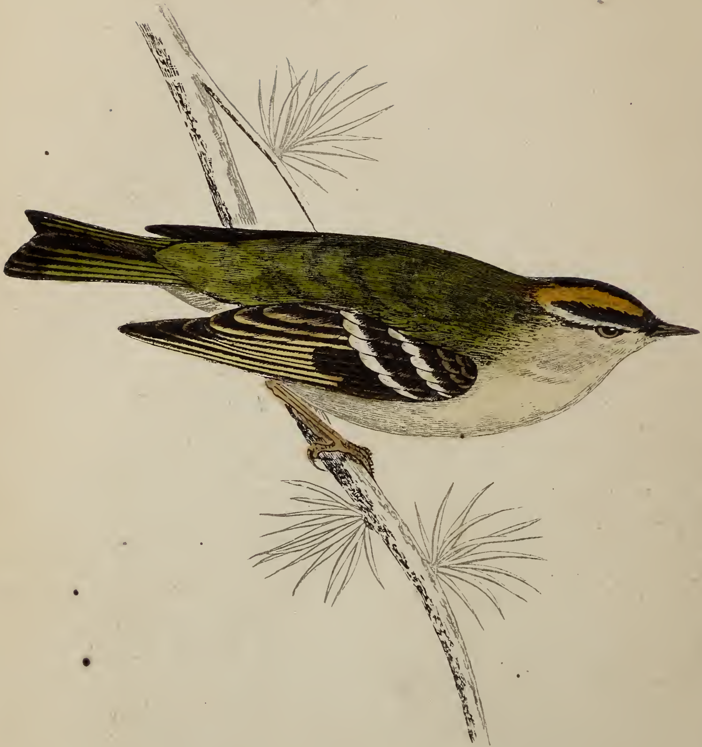
THE Baron De Feldegg, of Frankfort, shot one specimen of this bird in Dalmatia, in the year 1829, the first on record; and the only other that has as yet been met with was killed by Mr. John Hancock, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in the county of Northumberland, near Hartley, on the sea coast, on the 26th. of September, 1838. These are the only two, 'par nobile,' of these Kinglets that have yet been discovered in our continent, and none have been known anywhere else.

It feeds on insects.

Male; length, barely over four inches; bill, brown, the under mandible paler at the base, from which a light lemon-coloured streak extends over the eye to the back of the head, and another short similar streak beneath the eye, through which a narrow band of dusky passes. Head on the crown, greenish yellow, the centre with a streak of paler; neck and nape, greenish yellow: chin, throat, and breast, pale yellow; back, greenish yellow. The wings extend to the width of six inches and a half, and reach, when closed, to within three quarters of an inch of the end of the tail; the wing coverts are crossed with two conspicuous bands of lemon-colour; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dusky, edged with pale yellow, becoming broader on the secondaries. Legs and toes, brown, the under surface of the latter inclining to yellow; claws, brown.



DALMATIAN REGULUS.



GOLDCREST.

GOLDCREST.

GOLDEN-CRESTED KINGLET. GOLDEN-CRESTED WREN.
GOLDEN-CROWNED WREN.

Regulus cristatus,	FLEMING. RAY.
" *auricapillus,*	SELBY. JENYNS.
" *vulgaris,*	GOULD.
Motacilla regulus,	MONTAGU.
Sylvia regulus,	PENNANT. TEMMINCK.

Regulus—A diminutive of *Rex*—a king. *Cristatus*—Crested.

THE Goldcrest, the smallest of our British Birds, is a European species, and its northern range extends to the Arctic circle, being found in part of Russia and Siberia, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and south to Germany and the shores of the Mediterranean. It has been obtained also in Asia, in Persia, and, according to Temminck, in Japan.

This truly elegant and diminutive bird is generally distributed over the whole of England, from the 'Land's End to John O'Groat's House;' as also in Wales, Scotland, and in Ireland. It is more common in the north than in the south. In Yorkshire it is plentiful. In Orkney it is pretty numerous during winter; many arrive there in October and November, during gales from the east. It occurs also in Shetland.

Two of these little birds are stated in the 'Zoologist,' page 188, by Mr. George Swaysland, to have been met with at sea, forty miles from land. They remain with us all the year through, at least many of them do.

Additional ones come over to us in the autumn, and in like manner some again depart in the spring. In the midland counties fresh parties come in December, and some depart in March. On the Norfolk coast there are arrivals every year in October and November, and the birds are at first often so exhausted as to suffer themselves to be taken with the hand. Selby relates his having observed an immense flight on the 26th. of October, 1822, after a heavy gale on the two preceding days from the north-east, which also brought over the Redwings, Fieldfares, and Woodcocks. He ascertained the flight to have extended from Berwick-on-Tweed to Whitby, in Yorkshire. They were completely exhausted on their first arrival, and numbers were taken with the hand, but they shortly afterwards spread over the country, and at Christmas few more than the usual numbers were visible. He also adds the following, and it is certainly a very remarkable fact, as proving that non-migratory birds may become so on occasion, at all events to some distant part of the country, which indeed probably is the case with some of the present species every year for some cause or other, prescient of unfavourable seasons or inclement weather:—

'A more extraordinary circumstance in the economy of this bird took place during the same winter, namely, the total disappearance of the whole tribe, natives as well as strangers, throughout Scotland and the north of England. This happened towards the conclusion of the month of January, 1823, and a few days previous to the long-continued snow-storm so severely felt throughout the northern counties of England, and along the eastern parts of Scotland. The range and point of this migration are unascertained, but it must probably have been a distant one, from the fact of not a single pair having returned to breed, or pass the succeeding summer, in the situations they had been known always to frequent, nor was one of the species to be seen till the following October, or about the usual time, as I have above stated, for our receiving an annual accession to our indigenous birds.' Spurn Point, at the south-east extremity of Yorkshire, is said to be a favourite place for assemblage on arrival and departure. For a week or more in the month of October they come thither in a succession of small parties, and when they have formed into flocks of a few thousands, they disappear. The same thing was observed in November, 1844, on a smaller scale, on Looe Island, in Cornwall. In the year 1833, on the 7th. of October, a flock alighted on the rigging of a ship fourteen miles from land off Whitby.

Their favourite haunt is the pine, fir, or larch plantation, or wood, where they may be seen hanging in every variety of attitude, pictures of active existence, intent on their life's great business, the procuring of their food. They also at times are seen on open heaths, among furze bushes, and visit hedges, and birch, oak, cedar, willow, alder, and other trees, and even such low plants and bushes as the broom, in their vicinity, and rose trees and creeping plants near houses. They are lively and agile in all their movements, and seldom even hop without using their wings.

They are gregarious in their habits, and, except during the breeding season, travel in flocks, or rather societies, of greater or less numbers. When thus roaming, as indeed at all times, they are far from shy; and you can well watch them fluttering from bough to bough, from tree to tree, from plantation to plantation, ever in motion, and always interesting to behold. They are often joined by flocks of different species of Titmice, and a few Creepers. They are hardy and robust, though of such tender make, and brave the severity of the northern winter, though to some individuals of them it proves fatal. The female is very fearless and intrepid when she has a nest to protect, and will suffer a very close approach before quitting it. 'They will even continue on the branch while the nest is inspected, uttering shrill and distressing cries, and erecting the crest, as if wishful to attack the aggressor.' T. J. Wilkinson, Esq., of Walsham Hall, Suffolk, has sent me the following instance of this:—

'I myself can record a remarkable instance of the courage and intrepidity displayed by this charming little creature, during the process of incubation. I one day perceived a nest on a fir tree, in our orchard plantation, upon which I ascended, and after a considerable deal of trouble, succeeded in removing her from her nest, when to my great surprise she defended it with the utmost firmness and resolution sitting on a twig over against it, pecking and flying at my hand till I withdrew it, when she resumed her seat with apparent tranquillity. An instance of the docility of this elegant little bird perhaps would not be out of place. In April, 1851, a pair built their nest between the woodwork of our drawing-room window and the brickwork of the house, which only allowed them an aperture to enter not large enough to admit the first finger; and in spite of the piano, which was constantly played on, and close to the window, they hatched, but unfortunately, when the Hall was being repaired, the workmen pillaged the nest of its inhabitants.'

Two of these birds have been known to fight so determinedly that they were captured together with the hand and placed in a cage, where one having died of his wounds, the other again mounted upon it, pecked at it, and tried to draw it round the cage, and this though itself too died shortly afterwards. The female selected a new mate, and built a nest over the spot where the fatal battle was fought. Colonel Montagu also mentions one which would feed her young in a room even when the nest was taken into the hand. He found that she fed her brood once in every minute and a half or two minutes, averaging thirty-six times in the hour, and this for full sixteen hours in a day. The young ones, eight in number, would thus receive, if equally fed, seventy-two feeds each day, the whole amounting to five hundred and seventy-six. The male would not venture into the room.

They appear to bear confinement pretty well. In severe seasons many perish, and several are frequently at such times found dead in outhouses, the thatch of roofs, and holes in ivy-covered walls, where they had assembled together for mutual warmth under their shelter from the extremity of the wintry blast, and have been known to take up their abode in the nest of the Wren. In those times of scarcity they will even approach houses in search of food, and will enter greenhouses and hothouses. Even in mild seasons some are found in a lifeless state, but only single birds. They usually go in companies of twenty or thirty. It is said that they may be shaken down from a branch by striking a blow against the trunk of the tree.

In their longer passages from wood to wood, their flight, which is weak, is rather rapid, irregular, and undulating, but in their shorter flittings more straight. They sometimes exhibit an odd bowing movement of the body, especially in the spring when two are about to fight. They often run up trees with the nimbleness and agility of the Creeper.

Their food consists principally of small winged and other insects and their larvæ, and also of small seeds. In pursuit of the former they carefully search branch after branch, their elegant crests, so to call them, shewing to advantage every now and then; they also seize their prey on the wing, and hover sometimes over the branches before darting on it, and also creep nimbly in a mouse-like manner, up the trunks of trees, seldom in a straight line, but usually in a sloping direction, the capture of an insect being often denoted by a shuffle of the wings: one has also been observed creeping up a wall in like manner, searching for insects. 'The activity of this little bird is very surprising: it will alight on the branch of a tall tree in the copse, and after a momentary survey, will dart on its prey reposing on the back of the stem, suspend itself for a moment by a rapid motion of its wings, then return to a branch, again glance at the stem, and flit to it; in this manner it gradually mounts to the top of the tree, and, should its prey prove to be plentiful, will ascend and descend several times in succession, occasionally darting into the air at some unwary gnat sporting in the beams of the winter sun.'

Their song, as may be supposed, is a very small one; and Pennant mentions his having heard the bird utter it for a considerable time while hovering over a bush. It is very soft rather sweet, and pleasing, and is heard even in the beginning or middle of the early month of February, and sometimes as soon as the end of January: it is mostly given forth from a branch, or in a hedge, or while the bird is flying from tree to tree; as well as when hovering in the manner spoken of. The ordinary note is weak and feeble, but rather shrill; and in the quiet stillness of the depth of the wood it cannot fail to draw the attention, especially when the whole of the little party are incessantly uttering it: it is a mere 'tzit, tzit,' and 'see' or 'sree.'

These birds begin to pair even by the end of February, and Mr. Selby has known the young birds fully fledged so early as the third week in April, the nest being built in March. The nest is placed underneath and generally near the end of the branch of a fir, or occasionally on an oak, cypress, holly, yew, or other tree, as also not very unfrequently in a laurustinus or other bush, and, though very rarely, in a hedge, supported by some of the smaller offshoots, and further attached to these by the moss and lichens of which it is composed being interwoven with them, mixed sometimes with willow down, cocoons, spiders' webs, wool, grasses, and a few hairs. It measures about three inches and a half in diameter inside, and is deep and of a spherical shape, the orifice being almost always in the upper part: some however are not perfectly round. It closely assimilates in colour to the branch beneath which it is fixed. It is sometimes placed near the top of the tree, and at others only two or three feet from the ground: a very high gale has been known to dislodge the eggs—'When the wind blows the cradle will rock.' These birds have been known to steal the materials from the nests of Chaffinches to make their own; one was noticed to do so most slyly, watching its opportunity, and approaching from the opposite direction; but on the Chaffinch detecting and chasing it, it did not repeat the theft. It is frequently lined with feathers, and is altogether a singularly elegant piece of architecture; the feathers are so placed as to project inward: two nests have been found on one branch. Mr. Hewitson says 'It is sometimes placed upon the upper surface of the branch; and I have also seen it, but rarely, placed against the trunk of the tree upon the base of a diverging branch, and at an elevation of from twelve to twenty feet above the ground.' He also mentions in the 'Zoologist,' page 825, his having once met with the nest in a low juniper bush, very little more than a foot from the ground. Deserted nests of this species are frequently to be met with, but the reason is not known. The eggs in one nest were observed placed in two rows, with the small ends touching each other.

The eggs are four, five, six, or seven, to eight, or even ten, or even eleven in number; they are of a very pale reddish or brownish white, the larger end being much the darkest coloured, light reddish brown: some have been known pure white, sparingly spotted with reddish brown here and there. They are smaller than those of any other British bird, and are sometimes almost of a globular shape. The young are fed by both the parents. It is thought that two broods are reared in the year, and that the second is less numerous than the first. Eggs, fresh laid, have been met with in May and June, while young birds have been known fully fledged by the third week in April. The same nest has also been known to have been used twice the same season, two broods being hatched and reared; but whether by the same parents or not, of course could not be told.

Male; weight, about seventy-six or from that to eighty grains; length, three inches and a half, to three and three quarters; bill, blackish: the mouth, dusky orange; iris, dark brown; the eyelid, black: the eyes are surrounded by a pale dusky ring, encircled by another of dull white. Forehead, pale greyish white with a tinge of yellow; head on the sides, yellowish grey, on the crown, in its centre, bright reddish orange, the feathers elongated and of a silky texture; the inner webs of the inner feathers pale yellow, on each side of this is a black band; neck on the back and nape, light yellowish olive green, with a tint of brown; chin, throat, and breast, pale brownish or yellowish grey, the sides tinged with rufous yellow; back, light yellowish olive green, with a tint of brown, the lower part is the lightest—inclining to greenish yellow.

The wings expand to the width of six inches and a half; the first feather is very short—about a third the length of the second, the third much longer, the fourth rather the longest, the fifth nearly the same. Greater wing coverts, purple brown, bordered with yellowish green, and tipped with white; lesser wing coverts, also purple brown, bordered with yellowish green, and partly tipped with white; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dusky margined with yellowish green; six of the outer secondaries and inner primaries black. The tail, somewhat forked, is dusky, the feathers margined with yellowish green; upper tail coverts, light yellowish olive green; legs, toes, and claws, brown.

The female precisely resembles the male, but is rather smaller, the length being three inches and a half, and the crown has only yellow and no orange on its centre. The wings extend to the width of six inches.

The young in their first plumage have no yellow on the head, the upper part of it being light greyish brown, with two lateral bands of greyish black; the head on the sides is yellowish grey; the neck on the back and nape, greyish yellow green; chin, throat, and breast, greyish white, with a tinge of yellow; the quill feathers dusky, margined with dull yellowish green; tail, the same; legs and toes, pale brown.

The moult is completed the end of August, but the orange and yellow on the crown is not fully developed.

M. Temminck says that accidental varieties have the top of the head azure blue, that others of more frequent occurrence have the head and part of the plumage of a whitish colour, and frequently the feathers of the crest of a deep yellow. Montagu also mentions a pair of a cream-colour, with the usual yellow crown. In the British Museum is a white one, with pale orange-colour on the crown of the head, and very pale yellow on the lower part of the back. Another, kept in an aviary, had the tips of the wings and tail white, and the crest yellow.

FIRECREST.

FIRE-CRESTED KINGLET. FIRE-CROWNED KINGLET.
FIRE-CRESTED WREN.

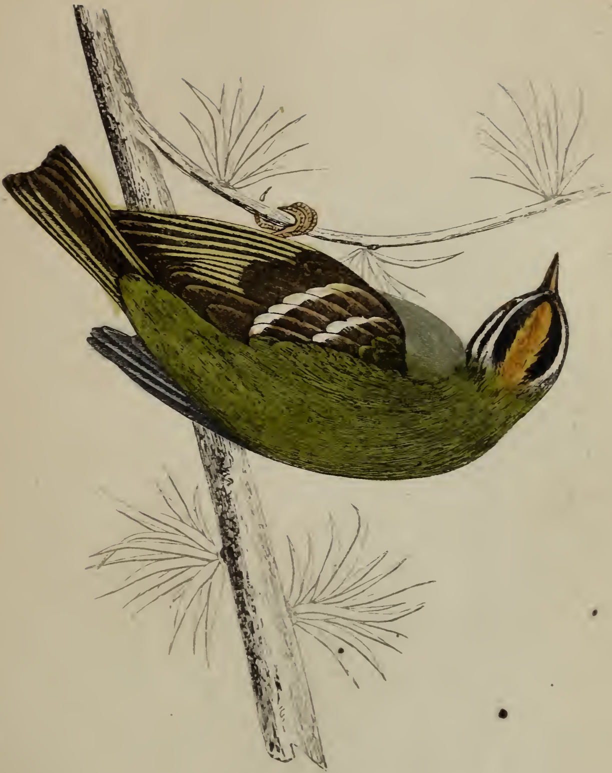
Regulus ignicapillus, JENYNS. MACGILLIVRAY.
Sylvia ignicapilla, TEMMINCK.

Regulus—A diminutive of *Rex*—a king. *Ignicapillus*. *Ignis*—Fire.
Capillus—A head of hair.

THIS closely-allied species, which M. Brehm was the first to discriminate, is found in large forests in Germany, and in Belgium, France, and Switzerland; Meyer says that it also belongs to North America.

The Rev. Leonard Jenyns first made known this bird as a British one, having obtained a specimen in his garden at Swaffham Bulbeck, near Cambridge, in the month of August, 1832. It was a young bird, and had therefore probably been reared in the same neighbourhood. Since then Mr. J. E. Gray has observed others at Brighton, in Sussex; one was obtained also near Durham, and another was caught on the rigging of a ship five miles out at sea, off the coast of Norfolk, in the early part of October, 1836; another was killed on the North Denes, near Yarmouth, the 6th. of November, 1843; one was shot in the parish of St. Clement, Cornwall, and Edward Hearle Rodd, Esq., of Penzance, says in the 'Zoologist,' page 3753, that this species frequents that neighbourhood, chiefly at Larrigan Valley, in greater or less numbers every year about the beginning of December, and that one was killed near Marazion in 1852. It has also been met with in Sutherlandshire, by Mr. Bantock, the Duke of Sutherland's gamekeeper.

These birds frequent fir and other plantations, as well as also larger trees. They too associate with the Titmice. They



are said to be more shy than the Goldcrests, and to go in smaller parties, more than six or seven, no doubt the family party, being seldom seen together. They are, like them, remarkably restless, and brisk and quick in all their motions, one moment intently engaged in the search for insects, the next, as if on some secret signal, 'exeunt omnes.' The male and female are said to exhibit great attachment to one another.

They feed on the same kind of food as the other species, and the livelong day witnesses their ceaseless pursuit of the insects which infest the places where they therefore seek and find them.

The nest is built of moss, wool, and a few grasses, lined with fur and feathers. It is suspended from the branch of a fir or other tree.

The eggs are said to be from five or six to eight or ten in number, and of a pale reddish yellow tint, minutely speckled with yellowish grey about the larger end, but they vary in size and colour.

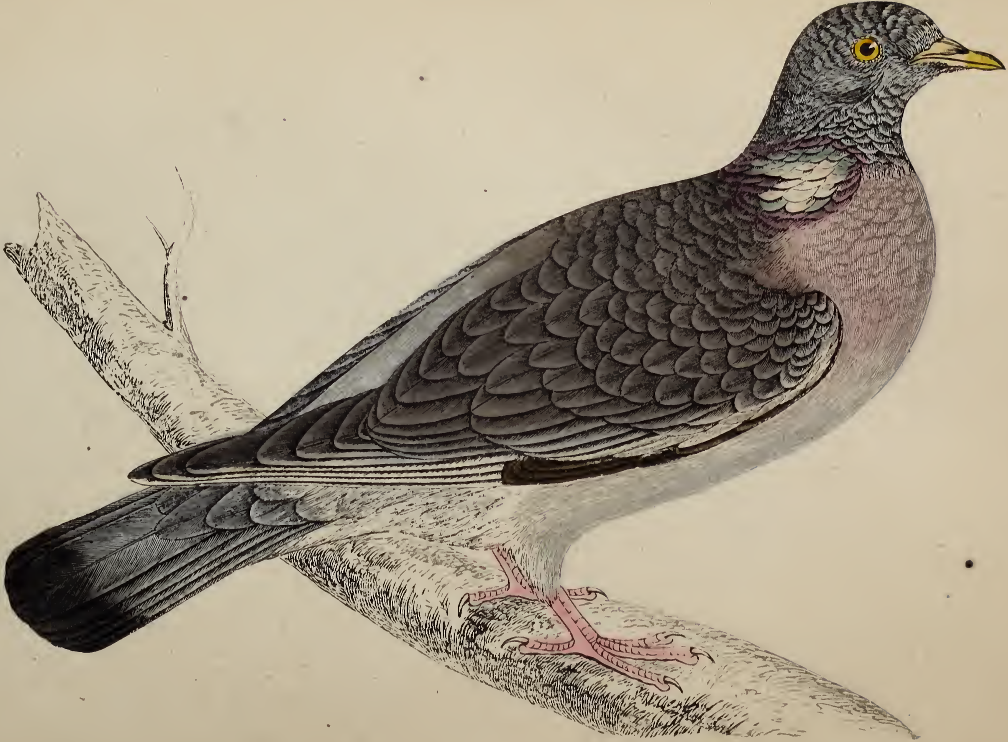
Male; length, not quite four inches; bill, black, broadened at the base; a black streak proceeds from its base through the eye, and below it is another; the inside of the mouth is orange-colour; iris, dark brown; over the eye is a greyish white streak, and also another under it. The crest, fiery red; on each side of it is a black streak, forming the third; forehead, greyish white, tinged with red or yellowish; neck on the back and nape, yellowish olive green, with a tint of brownish ash-colour; chin, throat, and breast, greyish white, strongly tinged on the sides with buff; back, yellowish olive green, with a tint of brown.

The wings have the first quill feather very short, the second shorter than the third, the fourth and fifth nearly equal, and the longest; greater wing coverts, dusky, broadly bordered with greenish white, and tipped with greyish white; lesser wing coverts, also dusky, broadly bordered with greenish white; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dusky, margined with yellowish green, the last-named most widely so, except towards the base, where their outer web is dusky black, forming a dark spot. Tail, dusky, margined with yellowish green; it is slightly forked, and extends three quarters of an inch beyond the closed wings. Legs and toes, yellowish brown, the soles yellow and rough; claws, brown.

The female has the crest fiery orange red, but somewhat faded; the bands on the sides of the head are less obvious than in the male, and the whole plumage not so bright.

In the young the base of the bill is horn-colour; the crest is pale lemon yellow, and indistinct; the forehead and head on the sides are cinereous, without any streaks; the upper plumage duller than in the adult, the lower tinged with yellow.

The figure is from a design by the Rev. Richard Pye Alington.



WOOD PIGEON.

WOOD PIGEON.

RING DOVE. CUSHAT. QUEEST.

Columba palumbus, PENNANT. MONTAGU.

Columba—A Pigeon. *Palumbus*—A Wood Pigeon.

THIS bird is a universal favourite, an emblem, as it is always considered, of peace, innocence, and conjugal fidelity. 'It was a Dove, ever since sacred to peace,' says Booth, 'that brought the olive branch to the ark of Noah, for which she has her place among constellations; and the christian world still personate the HOLY SPIRIT under the mystic emblem of a Dove.'

It is found in Europe as far north as the southern parts of Siberia and Russia, as in summer in Denmark and Sweden; likewise so far south as the latitude of Madeira, and in the northern part of the African continent, and in Asia.

The Ring Dove occurs throughout the whole of England and Scotland, so far north as Tongue in Sutherlandshire, and has been seen several times in the Orkneys. It has been killed in Sanday—one was shot in Orphir in the autumn of 1844, another at Pabdale by Mr. Duguid, and a third at the same place by Mr. Ranken, the 15th. of October, 1846.

It is with us a stationary inhabitant, but in the winter many are said to come over from the continent, and a departure again is accordingly supposed to take place in the spring. Of the enormous flocks which congregate in the winter, some do not separate till late in the spring, while others, in parliamentary phrase, 'pair for the session' by the beginning of March. In hard weather they sometimes make limited migrations, but such are not often called for—their food, unless covered with snow, being almost everywhere to be met with.

The Wood Pigeon is very good eating, except when in the winter it feeds on turnip-tops, and then a disagreeable flavour is imparted to it. When they come home to roost in their accustomed trees in fir plantations, or tall oaks, ash, or other trees in woods, by lying in wait below they are easily to be procured, but in the open day they are shy, and not easily approached, unless it may be when engaged with their young. They are capable of being tamed if brought up from the nest, and have even been known to shew some personal attachment, perching on the head or shoulders of their friend, and eating out of the hand. I have seen them more than once kept in cottages, and sadly out of their element they have seemed. They have not flown away in some instances even when at liberty to do so.

The late Frederick Holme, Esq., of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, wrote in the 'Zoologist,' page 1025, 'One of a pair, kept in a cage, having made its escape, liberty was given to the other; but it continued about the grounds, at first descending warily from a tree to take the food left on the ground, then feeding from the hand from the lower branches, till at length it became so perfectly tame and familiar that it tapped with its bill at the window, and would come, though with caution, into the sitting-room.'

Of another, tamed from the nest, the Rev. J. C. Atkinson writes in the 'Zoologist,' page 661, 'When the evening approached I went to seek for him, and proceeded to call him by whistling the call I used when I fed him. He instantly responded, and flew to my shoulder or head, and was taken in for the night. Occasionally I neglected to do so until long after his roosting-hour, but he never once refused to come when I called him; at last I left him out all night. He then roosted in some fir trees about a stone's cast from the house. No sooner did I make my appearance in the garden in the morning than I was sure to see him come flying to me for his breakfast; and at any time in the day, if I omitted to feed him at the stated intervals, he came to remind me of my neglect as soon as he saw me. Soon after he was regularly turned out in the day-time, I had taken him to the bed of peas, and there indulged him with the green peas, of which he was particularly fond; but he did not like the trouble of shelling them for himself; and if he saw me in that part of the garden, and was at all hungry, he generally flew first to me and then to the peas: if I did not follow him at once, but continued where I was, he soon returned, and after waiting a little, presently went back again. This I always understood as an invitation to go and open the pea pods for him; and it was one I always acceded to, although sometimes I caused it to be repeated several times.

He was now as nearly in a state of nature as possible; with abundance of his natural food within his reach, uncontrolled, as far as liberty was concerned, and with numerous birds of his own species in the neighbourhood. There was nothing to prevent his making off if he chose, yet he never shewed the least inclination to do so. He flew to me fearlessly as ever, to the very last day of my stay at home; if he saw me lying on the grass, he came and nestled on my breast. I walked about the garden, and in and out of the house with him on my shoulder; and though he never favoured any of my friends with the same symptoms of confidence and attachment as he did myself, he was under no kind of fear of them. At last 'Black Monday' came round again. I loved him too well to confine him; still less could I think of taking him back to school with me; so I left him to do as he liked.

For the first three or four days of my absence he continued to keep about the house; he seemed to be looking for something he had lost; once, and once only, he flew on my father's shoulder, but seemed instantly to be aware that it was not his well-loved master, and stayed no longer than to find it out. He was seen about the garden for long afterwards, but came no more near any of my relatives.

Some of his habits were sufficiently amusing. For instance, if a dead bird were shewn to him, his ire was instantly roused, and he attacked it with the greatest fierceness; a rough harsh note was first emitted, and then followed a shower of pecks and blows of the wing upon the bird, the feathers of which were dispersed in all directions. So determined was the onset, that the bird was half plucked in a very short time. If while sleeping—previous, that is, to his being left out all night—I awakened him unceremoniously, his anger was expressed much in the same way;—the rough coo and blow were instantly given.

I have never had another Ring Dove so thoroughly tame as this one, though I have succeeded in familiarizing several; the fact is, I never took so much pains and trouble with any other; and with respect to the individual in question, my firm impression is, that had I stayed at home until the breeding-season, at the arrival of which time he might probably have left me; but even then I should have expected him to pay me frequent visits for food, and most likely to have nested in the immediate vicinity of the house.

It is well known that few birds are wilder and more distrustful than the Ring Dove in autumn and winter; but that at the approach of spring they throw off much of their wildness, and become comparatively familiar and confiding; and it appears to me somewhat remarkable that the strongest case of this change of their habits I ever heard of, has since occurred in the garden about which my tame Dove spent his time. A pair of these birds nested in a shrub about twenty yards from the front of the house. Under the shrub was placed a garden chair, which was usually occupied several hours in the day. Reading aloud was frequently resorted to by the parties occupying the chair; and three or four children were pursuing their sports all round, and, like all other children, did not always pursue them in 'solemn silence.' But this was not all.—The nest was not six feet from the ground, and visitors were often introduced to the sitting bird, who, seeming to care nothing for the close approximation of human eyes to her own, sat on in spite of all, and in due time hatched. This regardlessness of the eye of man has always seemed to me very strange. Look steadfastly at your favourite dog, and he turns away his eye in apparent uneasiness, and will not look at you, even though you call him, while he suspects you are still gazing at him. The wild-fowl shooter will tell you to be careful not to look at the approaching flight of Wild Ducks, for they will 'see your eye' and turn another way. Walk under the tree in your garden, where the Ring Dove is sitting, take no notice of her, and she will take none of you: come back again and look steadfastly at her as you pass, and in nineteen cases out of twenty she will fly off. Yet in the case I am describing, the visitor's eye was often not more than two feet from the bird, and unless it was long fixed on her, she never moved. During the time of incubation, the male, or that bird which was not sitting, for I believe the male relieves the female for a space of seven or eight hours every day—the Domestic Pigeon certainly does—was generally to be seen sitting in an ash tree at the bottom of the garden. A similar instance of extraordinary confidence was exhibited, and probably by the same birds, in the following spring.

Some people, we all know, adopt very singular theories on certain subjects; and so long as they are theories merely, or quite innocent, or their upholders do not seek to enforce their adoption upon other people, I do not see why the theorists should be disturbed in their belief, and on this ground I claim indulgence when I assert my belief that these very familiar and fearless Ring Doves were either the direct descendants of my old pet, or that one of them was the identical pet in question. I make a point of believing this, for it is to me a satisfactory belief, and it is not after all a very singular theory, although it must be confessed that a period of five or six years intervened between the departure of my bird and the occurrence of this instance of fearless tameness.'

The following, too, occurs in 'Jesse's Scenes and Tales of Country Life:'—'Every sportsman knows that the Common Wood Pigeon (the Ring Dove) is one of the shyest birds we have, and so wild that it is very difficult indeed to get within shot of one. This wild bird has however been known to lay aside its usual habits. In the spring of 1839, some village boys brought two young Wood Pigeons, taken from the nest, to the parsonage house of a clergyman, in Gloucestershire, from whom I received the following anecdote:—'They were bought from the boys merely to save their lives, and sent to an old woman near the parsonage to be bred up. She took great care of them, feeding them with peas, of which they are very fond. One of them died, but the other grew up and was a fine bird. Its wings had not been cut, and as soon as it could fly it was set at liberty. Such, however, was the effect of the kindness it had received, that it would never quite leave the place. It would fly to great distances, and even associate with others of its own kind; but it never failed to come to the house twice a day to be fed. The peas were placed for it in the kitchen window. If the window was shut, it would tap with its beak till it was opened, then come in, eat its meal, and then fly off again. If by any accident it could not then gain admittance, it would wait somewhere till the cook came out, when it would pitch on her shoulder, and go with her into the kitchen. What made this more extraordinary was, that the cook had not bred the bird up, and the old woman's cottage was at a little distance; but as it had no peas left, it came to the parsonage to be fed. This went on for some time; but the poor bird having lost its fear of man, was therefore exposed to constant danger from those who did not know it. It experienced the fate of most pets:—a stranger saw it quietly sitting on a tree, and shot it, to the great regret of all its former friends.''

Another tamed one has been known, after flying away to a considerable distance, and remaining absent for several hours, to return again.

In a few instances they have been known to breed in confinement.

The following is from 'The Naturalist,' volume i, page 28, from the pen of my friend the Rev. R. P. Alington, a true lover of nature, and one of the best and most thorough of out-of-door naturalists; it is a good specimen too of the 'multum in parvo:'—'As soon as twilight commences, the various flocks begin to collect, and settle in numbers upon the larch firs: when they arrive at their roosting-ground, they not unfrequently take two or three turns high in the air, and then the whole flock will commence dropping, with closed wings and a rushing sound, upon the trees: they generally spend half an hour or so upon the very topmost branches, their vinous breasts glittering in the setting sun. As darkness comes on they retire to the lower branches to roost; as each bird descends, a loud flap of the wing may be heard—an exciting sound to the expecting gunner—now is the time for him: the increasing darkness prevents the birds leaving the wood, and many may be secured during the last half hour of the lingering light. But during the day their extreme shyness renders it a most difficult task to get within shot. In the clear, cold, frosty days in winter, they may be heard at a considerable distance—their wings making a whistling sound. As spring comes on, their numbers, in this district, rapidly decrease, and they leave, (where they go I know not,) to breed—a very few to all appearance remaining here. These now desert the woods, and very often approach the garden to feed upon the new-sown pea.'

The late Bishop Stanley says, 'That birds of this species can form odd attachments, we may learn from the following strange association between a House Pigeon and a cat:—The Pigeon had made her nest in a loft much infested with rats, which had more than once destroyed her eggs, or devoured her young ones. Her repeated losses at length induced her to rebuild her nest in another part of the loft, where a cat was raising three kittens, with whom she contrived to form a strong friendship. They fed from the same dish, and when the cat went out into the field, the Pigeon was often observed to be fluttering near her. The Pigeon, aware of the advantage of her protection, had placed her nest close to the straw bed of the cat, and there in safety reared two broods of young ones; and, in return for the protection she experienced from the cat, she became a defender of the young kittens, and would often attack with beak and wings any person approaching too near.'

In a Scotch paper for February 13th., 1838, it is stated, 'A circumstance, perhaps unprecedented in the annals of freezing, was discovered here last week. A person found in this neighbourhood, (Crieff,) a Wild Pigeon literally frozen to the branch of a tree, and so intense was the freeze, that the individual cut the branch, and carried the Pigeon home in that state alive.'

'If the habits,' says Meyer, 'of the Wood Pigeon are accurately observed, it will be seen that it leads a very regular life, and that it divides the day after the following manner:—From six to nine in the morning the time is occupied in searching for food. About ten o'clock the whole party returns home, and may be heard calling their 'hoo, hoo, coo, coo, hoo.' At eleven the calling ceases, and the party is again off in search of drink, and probably also to bathe, as we know them particularly to delight in the latter exercise. From twelve to two is again set apart as a season for resting, after which they go to feed until five; then return to their wood, where they repeat their concert until seven, when, after having taken some more water, they retire to roost.' This, however, cannot apply to the winter portion of the year.

Wood Pigeons are often seen in vast flocks, as well as in smaller ones, and some will occasionally intermingle with tame Pigeons in a field. Several pairs will frequently build near each other, as if in this respect of gregarious habits, but single nests shew also that it is not the universal rule. The young birds, no doubt 'in terrorem' both active and passive, swell out their necks if approached, and utter a puffing sort of sound. This in one instance was known to alarm and frighten away a foster tame Pigeon, under whom the eggs had been placed; she was possibly as strange to them as their unknown language was to her.

Its flight, though rather slow at times, is on occasion strong, swift, straight, and powerful, the pinions sounding as it cuts the air, the result of repeated strong and regular flappings of the wings, and generally at a considerable height in the air, unless the wind be very high. On the ground it moves in an easy and graceful manner, now walking more erect, and nodding the head at every step, now in a lower position, and now peering about in suspicion of any approach of danger. It roosts near the tops of the tallest trees it can resort to, and comes home for that purpose about sunset, leaving them again at sunrise for the fields. Before settling they usually wheel about the spot where they desire to alight, and if disturbed from it, fly off to a short distance and then return, but if more frequently alarmed move away. 'In fine weather they bask in the sun on dry banks, or in the open fields, rubbing themselves, and, as it were, burrowing in the sand or soil, and throwing it up with their wings, as if washing in water, which they often do, like most birds. In drinking they immerse the bill to the base, and take a long draught.'

On arriving at a feeding place, they alight suddenly, and generally stand for a short time to reconnoitre. While searching for food the body is depressed, and they walk quickly along, moving the head backwards and forwards. The flock disperse about, but keep out of the way of danger.

The Wood Pigeon feeds on grain in all its stages—wheat, barley, and oats, peas, beans, vetches, and acorns, beech-mast, the seeds of fir cones and wild mustard, charlock, ragweed, and other seeds, green clover, grasses, small esculent roots, ivy and other berries, and in the winter on turnip leaves and their roots in hard weather—the first-named are all swallowed whole. It may safely be said that any damage it does, and some it must be confessed is done by it among seed tares, and pea fields, is abundantly compensated by the good that it effects in the destruction of the seeds of injurious plants. Even the larger ones that they eat are swallowed whole.

The well-known note of the Cushat—its soft 'coo, coo-coo, coo-coo,' begun sometimes towards the latter end of February, and continued till October, always harmonizes well with every quiet rural scene; and pleasant it is to listen to the plaintive 'melancholy music' as you 'walk in the fields to meditate,' or lie on some grassy bank in the settled summer time, when all nature has thrown off the mantle that cold had wrapped around her, and again comes forth in her renewed beauty, courting scrutiny in the full blaze of the sun, 'shining in his strength.' 'You may look, and look, and look again,' and in every insect that hovers about you, every overhanging flower, every passing cloud, every murmuring breeze, and the note of every bird, see what you cannot see, and hear what you cannot hear, the hand and the voice of GOD.

Early in the spring, at sunrise, the Ring Dove cooes to his mate, perched on the same or some neighbouring bough, then mounts in the air, and floats or sails to the top of the nearest tree, or, cooing all the while, will continue rising and falling several times, with a peculiar sort of flight, and when at its greatest elevation flapping the wings together backwards with a distinct sound, audible at some distance on a still day.

The nest, wide and shallow, placed usually at a height of from sixteen to twenty feet from the ground, is little more than a rude platform of a few crossed sticks and twigs, the largest as the foundation, so thinly laid together that the eggs or young may sometimes be discovered from below. It is often built in woods and plantations, but not unfrequently also in single trees, even those that are close to houses, roads and lanes, the oak and the beech, the fir or any other suitable one, or even in ivy against a wall, rock, or tree, or in a thick bush or shrub in a garden, or an isolated thorn, even in the thick part, so that in flying out in a hurry, if alarmed, many of the loosely-attached feathers are pulled out. One pair built in a spruce fir not ten yards from a garden gate, where they were constantly liable to disturbance by the ringing of the bell, and the passing in and out of the members of the family. Another pair dwelt two years in succession close to a window by a frequented walk, and this, though a cat destroyed the young.

The eggs, which are delicious eating, are two in number, pure white, and of a rounded oval form; two and sometimes three broods are produced in the season, but the third may possibly be only the consequence of a previous one having been destroyed or prevented: the eggs are hatched in sixteen or seventeen days. The young are fed from the bills of the parent birds with the food previously swallowed, reduced to a sort of milk. The male and female both take their turns in hatching the eggs and in feeding the young, the former sitting from six to eight hours—from nine or ten in the morning to about three or four in the afternoon.

The first brood are abroad by the beginning of May; the second in the end of July. Mr. Macgillivray has known the young unfledged in October, and a pair with down tips to the feathers on the 26th. of that month; Mr. Hewitson, too, so late as the middle of September; and R. A. Julian, Esq., Jun., on the 15th. of that month, 1851, at Minchenay, near Holbeton, Devon; so also E. C. Nunn, Esq., at Trevan Wood, near Diss, Norfolk, on the 25th. of the same month in the same year.

Male; weight, about twenty ounces; length, one foot five inches and a half to one foot six inches; bill, pale reddish orange yellow, red at the base, powdered over with a white dust; the cere almost white; iris, pale yellow; the eyelids yellowish red, the bare part above them blue. Head, crown, and neck on the back, greyish blue; on the sides some of the feathers are bright green and some cream-coloured, and below purple. The ring around, which is glossy white, and composed on each side of twelve or fourteen scale-like feathers, is begun to be assumed at about the end of two months, and a fortnight suffices for its full development. In front the neck is brownish purple, fading towards the breast and sides into light greyish blue. Nape, greyish blue; chin, bluish grey; throat, purple red; back above, greyish blue, tinged with brown; below, light greyish blue.

Extent of the wings from two feet four to two feet five inches. The first quill feather is nearly as long as the fourth, the second and third the longest; greater and lesser wing coverts, dark bluish grey, the first four or five feathers of each white or partially white, forming a white bar, much the most conspicuous when the wings are spread. Primaries, greyish black, the outer edges narrowly white; tertiaries, dark bluish grey; greater and lesser under wing coverts, light greyish blue. The tail, of twelve feathers, is long and very broad, slightly rounded at the end, the two middle feathers bluish grey, the ends, for a third of the whole length, dark bluish grey, the others dull greyish blue in colour at the base, lighter in the middle, and greyish black at the end; underneath it is greyish black, with a band across the middle of bluish grey; upper tail coverts, light greyish blue. The legs, which are feathered below the knee, and the toes, are purple red, darkest behind—they are covered with scales. Claws, dark brown.

The female differs very little from the male—the colours not so bright. Length, one foot five inches and a quarter. The wings expand to the width of two feet four inches. The tail tinged with brown.

The young are at first covered with pale yellow down, and have the eyes closed by a film, through which the pupil of the eye may be plainly seen, for nine days after they are hatched. When fully fledged they are of the same colours as the adult, but duller in tint, and tinged with brown, the white ring and the iridescent hues being wanting. After the first moult the plumage is complete, but becomes afterwards somewhat deeper and purer. Varieties have sometimes been met with spotted with white. A liver-coloured one was shot by Mr. George Johnson, of Melton Ross, Lincolnshire.

STOCK DOVE.

Columba œnas, PENNANT. SELBY.

Columba—A Dove. *Oinos*—Wine; from the vinous colour of its breast.

THE Stock Dove is found in Europe—in Germany and France, Spain and Italy, Sweden, Norway, and Finland. In North Africa, and also in Madeira; as likewise in Asia—namely in Persia; and in Africa—in Egypt, and in the islands of the Mediterranean.

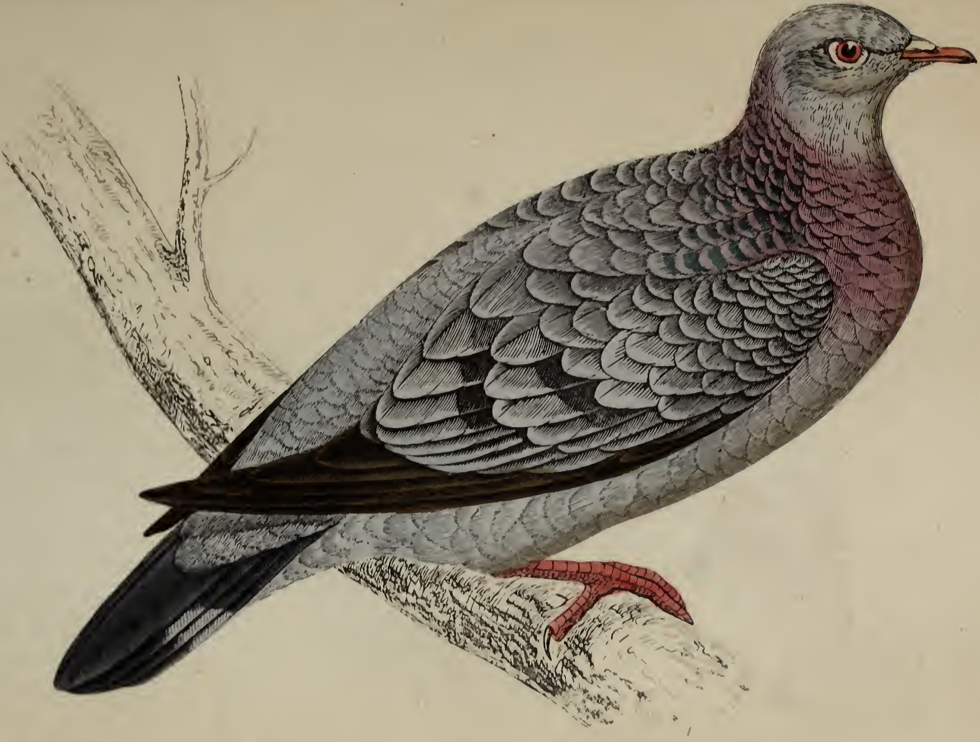
In Yorkshire, a few have been met with in the neighbourhood of York, and a few are also noticed in the vicinity of Sheffield. In Norfolk it is common, but local; also in Hertfordshire and Essex. The same is the case in other southern and midland counties.

It frequents woods, coppices, and groves, and these both in low and more hilly countries, suiting itself alike among oaks and fruit trees, beeches and firs, or any others that present facilities for building purposes.

It remains in some parts of the country throughout the year, but is migratory in others, leaving its summer haunts towards the end of October.

The Stock Dove becomes easily tame in confinement, and will even return to its cage after being loosed from it.

They roost in trees, and consort with the Ring Dove in winter, at which time they also assemble in large flocks. They are restless in their habits. While the hen is sitting, her partner frequently comes to look after her. Like others of the genus they are much attached to each other, and though several pairs build in the same neighbourhood, are never seen to quarrel. They are cleanly and neat in all their habits. The young birds are much esteemed as an article of food.



STOCK DOVE.

Their flight is exceedingly rapid. On first taking wing, they clap their pinions together once or twice, which, when many are in company, causes a considerable sound. On the ground they are active and lively, running quickly in rather an upright posture, with a stately deportment, nodding the head at each step. They perch on trees, but the larger branches only are suitable for their footing.

Their food is composed of young green leaves, seeds of plants and trees—hemp, rape, and others, berries, beech-mast, acorns, peas, and grain of various sorts.

The note, mostly heard in the morning, but both at 'Night and Morn,' is a repeated 'coo-oo-oo.'

Nidification begins about the end of March, or the beginning of April.

The nest, which is flat and shallow—a mere layer of a few sticks slightly put together, is often placed on the ground in an old deserted rabbit burrow, where any exist, and in this case on the bare sand or earth, a few sticks being occasionally used; and in such places under furze and other bushes, where the surface is hollowed; also, ordinarily, in any suitable holes in trees, from four or five feet to ten times that height from the ground. The same hole is sometimes resorted to again, but not the same year, and if disturbed by other would-be-tenants, they stoutly defend their own: a second brood is reared in the year. Incubation lasts about seventeen days, and in about a month the young are able to fly. The parents are very careful of the eggs, and will even sit on them till taken off with the hand. James Dalton, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, has found the nest of the Stock Dove in a hollow of a decayed elm tree, something more than a foot in depth, at Hillesden, near Buckingham; the nest was made of hay or grass. Leaves are on occasion used likewise for the purpose.

The eggs, white, are smaller than those of the Queest, and somewhat pointed at the smaller end, but rounded on the whole, and of an oval shape.

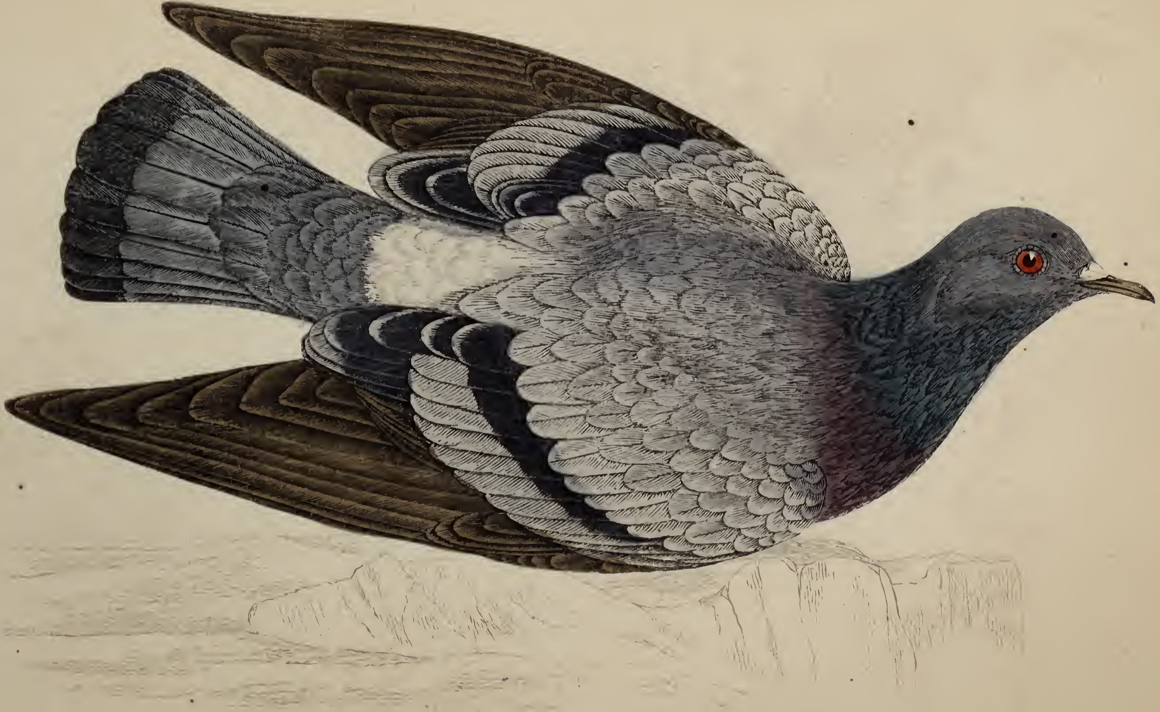
Male; length, one foot two inches; bill, pale reddish orange brown, the edges greyish yellow, the bare part round it pale yellowish red; the cere, red, excepting the hind part, which is white; iris, yellowish scarlet red; head and crown, bluish grey; neck on the sides, glossy iridescent green and purple red; on the back and nape, bluish grey; chin, bluish grey. Breast above, brownish purple red, shading off downwards into bluish grey, grey on the lower part and sides. Back above, bluish brown, then bluish grey, and on the lower part grey.

The wings rather long—two feet two inches in expanse, have the second quill feather the longest, the third nearly of the same length, the first a little shorter; greater and lesser wing coverts, bluish grey: sometimes one or more of these feathers has a single leaden grey spot; primaries, dark leaden grey, the outer margins paler; secondaries, light bluish grey at the base of the outer web, the ends dark leaden grey, the three inner have a large patch of black on their outer webs; tertiaries, bluish grey, the last three with a leaden grey spot on the outer web; greater and lesser under wing coverts, grey. The tail, of twelve feathers, and slightly rounded at the end, is bluish grey for two thirds of its length, then succeeded by a narrow band of a lighter grey, the end dark leaden grey: the inner part of the outer web of the outer feather on each side is almost white; upper tail coverts, grey; under tail coverts, grey; the legs are feathered in front one third down, and are, as the toes, carmine purple red; claws, light brown, yellowish grey towards the end.

The female scarcely differs from the male, except in size, and in the less purity of colours. Length, one foot one inch and a half. The wings expand to the width of not quite two feet two inches.

The young are at first without the metallic shades on the sides of the neck, and the spots on the tertiaries.

Individuals vary slightly in colour. The quills of the wings when worn become browner.



ROCK DOVE

ROCK DOVE.

ROCKIER.

Columba livia, SELBY. JENYNS. GOULD.

Columba—A Pigeon, or Dove. *Livia*—(*Quære,* for *Livida*—Black and blue—lead-colour.)

IF you look at each and every one of the Pigeons that fly about the barn and fold-yard, or rise in a flock from the open field, nay, if you glance at any of those that hang up in the poulterer's shop in the narrowest street in London,—in even which, by the way, you can, if your lot is cast in the great city, make frequent ornithological observations, and, losing yourself for a moment in pleasing thought in the Haymarket, the Turnstile, the Rookery, the Grove, or the Strand—apologies now for the scenes that gave them their names of old—realize the 'rus in urbe,'—you will see that every individual bird, let the varied colours of its plumage be what they may, has a patch of white over the tail. This will at once shew you that it must derive its origin from the species at present before us, which has the like distinguishing mark, and not, as might naturally be supposed by any one who was not cognizant of the fact, from the common Wild Pigeon of the woods.

The name of this species designates its habits of life, as a dweller among rocks and cliffs of the sea-girt isle or the mainland; but in the interior it puts up with old ruins or towers. It is a native of the former situations in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, in the rocky islands of the Mediterranean, eastward as far as Greece, and northward to the Ferroe Islands; and likewise occurs in North Africa, Madeira, and Teneriffe; and in Asia—in Japan and Persia.

In Yorkshire, the Rock Dove is plentiful among the high cliffs of Flamborough and Speeton.

In Scotland, it frequents most of the rocky shores of Sutherlandshire, also those of Ross-shire, Morayshire, and Cromarty; in fact any such on both the east and west coasts.

In Orkney, the Wild Pigeon abounds, being found almost everywhere where there are rocks or caves to afford them a secure building retreat. The same is the case in Shetland and the Hebrides, or Western Islands.

These birds are commonly believed to pair for life; if the female be killed her partner exhibits the most expressive emotions of distress; and it is long, if ever, before he changes his widowed state: some are even said to have been known to have died with grief—'I did mourn as a Dove,' says Daniel, borrowing from nature the most expressive image that he could use. They are capable of being easily tamed if taken young, which indeed is evidenced by the domesticated race, and one has been known to have lived full twenty years. Mr. Edward, of Banff, has recorded in the 'Banffshire Journal' an instance of a Common Pigeon having lived to the seventeenth year of its age; and of one which he brought up, the late lamented Macgillivray thus feelingly writes, in recording its untimely fate:—'Long and true was my sorrow for my lost companion, the remembrance of which will probably continue as long as life. I have since mourned the loss of a far dearer Dove. They were gentle and loving beings; but while the one has been blended with the elements, the other remains, 'Hid with Christ in God,' and for it I 'mourn not as those that have no hope.''

Wild Pigeons live peaceably among their neighbours, and amicably among themselves, and if any slight differences, for the most part for the same dwelling-place, ever arise, 'Amantium iræ amoris integratio est.' In the winter they collect into flocks, as also in the autumn and the spring sometimes of several hundred or even thousand individuals, and then may be approached, with care, rather more nearly than at other times, for ordinarily they are shy. Macgillivray writes, 'When searching for food, they walk about with great celerity, moving the head backwards and forwards at each step, the tail sloping towards the ground, and the tips of the wings tucked up over it. In windy weather they usually move in a direction more or less opposite to the blast, and keep their body nearer to the ground than when it is calm, the whole flock going together. When startled, they rise suddenly, and by striking the ground with their wings, produce a crackling noise. When at full speed, they fly with great celerity, the air whistling against their pinions......They usually alight abruptly when the place is open and clear, and, if very hungry, immediately commence their search, although, on alighting, they frequently stand and look around them for a few moments. On other occasions, however, they fly over the field in circles, descending gradually. When flying from the rocks to the places where they procure their food, and when returning in the evening, they do not mount high in the air; and when passing over an eminence, they fly so low as almost to touch it. When the wind is very high, and their course is against it, they fly in the same manner, taking advantage of the shelter.

It is a fine sight to see them from the top of some high cliff, scudding and shooting along below with the great velocity for which their flight is so remarkable, the wings rapidly beating the air. If however in no hurry, they fly more leisurely, and with slower strokes. In walking, or rather running, in the fields in feeding, they sometimes aid their advance by a flutter of the wings, and I have observed, in a flock of tame Pigeons feeding in a field, the hind ones, every few moments, flying over the rest, and taking their places in front, to have their turn of the best pickings, and this in constant succession, as if the whole of the flock admitted the right in each other, and claimed it individually for themselves. At times, especially in the spring, they may be seen circling in the air, sailing about before settling, with the wings closed together over the back. They roost in their holes and caves, and occasionally, it is said, on the ground in open fields. They are fond of bathing, and also of rolling themselves in, and sprinkling themselves with dust.

The food of the Rock Dove consists of grain and seeds, such as barley, peas, oats, charlock, and wild mustard, and they also feed, in default of these, on different species of snails; a few fragments of stone, or, where old buildings are inhabited, of mortar, are also swallowed. The quantity of grain consumed is very great; thus, in two specimens examined by Mr. Macgillivray, the number of seeds of grain found were, in one, over a thousand, and in the other, five hundred and ten. 'Now supposing there may be five thousand Wild Pigeons in Shetland or in Fetlar, which feed on grain for six months every year, and fill their crops once a day, half of them with barley, and the other half with oats, the number of seeds picked up by them, would be two hundred and twenty-nine million five hundred thousand grains of barley, and four hundred and fifty million grains of oats—a quantity which would gladden many poor families in a season of scarcity. I am unable to estimate the number of bushels, and must leave that task to the curious. What is the number of Pigeons, wild and tame, in Britain; and how much grain do they pick up from the fields and corn yards? It is probable that were the seeds of the cereal plants, which all the granivorous birds in the country devour annually, accurately known, it would prove much higher than would be imagined; yet by far the greater part of it would be of no use to man, were all the birds destroyed, it being irrecoverably dispersed over the fields.' Every morning they fly off from their fastnesses, to levy contributions on the nearest cultivated country, resorting to regular feeding places while food is to be found in plenty; but when the contrary is the case, they are compelled to seek for it in all directions.

They drink often, and, as do the other Pigeons, by a continued draught. The young ones are fed with food previously swallowed by the parents, and they receive it with a fluttering of the wings and a low plaining note of hunger.

The Rock Pigeon does not perch in trees, but in lieu thereof takes its stand on some high spot, at the same time secure and outlooking.

The note is a 'coo-roo-coo' quickly repeated, the last 'coo' prolonged.

They build in companies, many often in the same cavern. The nest is composed of sticks and dry stalks, and blades of grass and other plants, laid together without much care. The bed is fresh made, without much trouble for a new brood as soon as the former has been sent at large. The first eggs are laid about or towards the middle of April, and the latest, the latter end of August; the young are seen about the end of September.

The eggs are white, and two in number; while the hen is sitting, the cock bird feeds her, and even at other times she will often take a morsel from his mouth: at night he remains close to the nest. The young birds are fledged in about three weeks, and after a few days education by their parents, go their ways to provide for themselves.

Male; weight, eleven ounces; length, one foot one inch to one foot two inches; bill, dull brownish black, with a tinge of orange—it is much compressed about the middle both in depth and width; cere, brownish black in front, the hind portion white. Iris, pale orange; eyelids, reddish; head, crown, and neck on the back, dark bluish grey, the latter on the sides glossed with purple red, and green reflections, the former the foremost; chin, bluish grey. Throat, purple and green, varying with the light, breast, light greyish blue; back on the upper part, light bluish grey, then bluish grey, and on the lower part white.

The wings, which expand to the width of from two feet one inch to two feet three inches, have the first feather shorter than the second and third, which are nearly of equal length and the longest in the wing, the fourth much shorter than the first. Greater wing coverts, dull bluish grey, each with a black spot near the end forming a conspicuous black band; lesser wing coverts, light bluish grey: primaries and secondaries, dull bluish grey on the outer web of the first and part of the second feather, and lighter on the inner, dusky towards the end; tertiaries, light bluish grey tipped with black, and exhibiting a second conspicuous band of black; greater and lesser under wing coverts, white. The tail, of twelve feathers, bluish grey for two thirds of its length, the shafts black, an inch of the end leaden black, the band thus formed widest in the middle; the outer web of the side feather is white as far as the black band. Upper tail coverts, dark bluish grey; legs and toes, carmine red, the former scaled in front, and the latter on their upper surface; claws, brownish black. The feathers of the body adhere loosely, and easily come off.

The female is of less bright colours than the male. Length, one foot one inch, to one foot one inch and a half; the neck has less green. Extent of wings, from two feet one inch, to two feet two inches and a half, the black bars on these are shaded with grey, and their tips are tinged with brown. The tail has the tip also tinged with brown.

The young are at first covered with yellow down.

TURTLE DOVE.

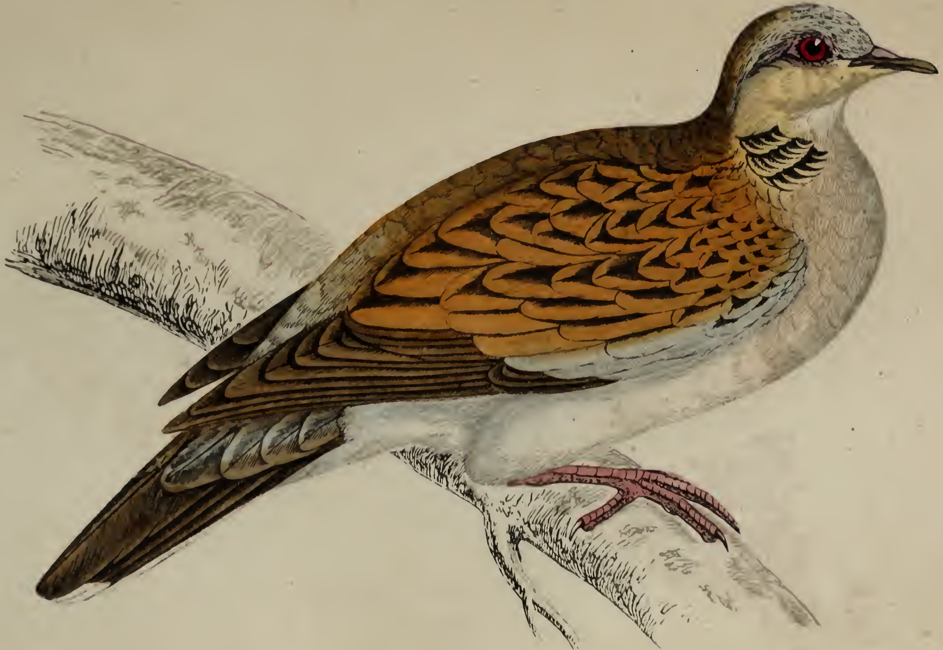
Columba Turtur,	LINNÆUS. LATHAM.
Turtur auritus,	RAY.

Columba—A Pigeon. *Turtur*—The Turtle Dove.

THIS beautiful bird is an inhabitant of Africa, from whence it crosses to Europe, and is met with in Germany, Italy, and other countries of the continent. It has been noticed also in Asia—in Asia Minor, the East Indies, Japan, China, and the islands of the South Seas.

The Turtle Dove breeds in Bagley wood, Berkshire, near Oxford, as James Dalton, Esq., of Worcester College, has informed me. In Yorkshire one was obtained some years since near Halifax, and one also in 1824, 'near fair Rotherham,' not so fair in these times of smoke, as in the days of yore, those of the 'Dragon of Wantley;' another was shot at High Catton, near York, one seen by Arthur Strickland, Esq., near Burlington, and one taken near Scarborough. It is the most plentiful in the 'Eastern Counties.' In Cambridgeshire, a few individuals of this species visit the plantations in the neighbourhood of Bottisham, every spring, and it has also been noticed at Stretchwood and Wood-Ditton. In Norfolk, it is pretty common in the summer; as also in Essex and Suffolk. In Kent, where it is the most plentiful, I have seen it in the neighbourhood of Sittingbourne. A few occur in Dorsetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall; and one has also been observed in Northumberland, in the autumn—namely, on Prestwick Car, in September, 1794, as recorded by Bewick. Thomas Eyton, Esq., of Eyton, says that it is found in Shropshire 'All round the Wrekin.' It has also been observed in Lancashire, and even in Cumberland.

In Scotland, Charles St. John, Esq has twice seen a pair in Morayshire, in the autumn. Sir William Jardine, Bart.



TURTLE DOVE.

shot one in the garden of Jardine Hall, Dumfriesshire, and another was shot in Perthshire, so late as the 20th. of October, in the year 1834. Two also in Aberdeenshire, one near Old Aberdeen, in August, in 1849, and the other in September, 1851, both of them young birds. In Orkney one was shot many years since, by Mr. Strang; another at Deernen, near Kirkwall; and one in Holm, in 1850.

With us they are migratory, arriving in the spring the latter end of April, and departing the end of August or September. The males arrive before the females, and they appear to pair only for the season.

They go in small flocks of some twenty in number, frequenting the open fields when feeding, and at other times resorting to woods. On their first arrival they are not shy, and may be easily approached; but when the nest is begun, and afterwards, they become gradually more and more so. They frequent wooded districts, both hilly and flat. They may be kept in confinement, but in that state are quarrelsome with other birds.

They roost in trees, among the concealment of the leaves. Their flight is airy and light.

They feed on various kinds of grain and seeds, and are especially fond of peas, with which fields are sown; as also of the seeds of the fir tree, but all are sought for on the ground where they may have fallen; they also eat small snails, and swallow bits of stone, sand, or mortar. They are fond of drinking and bathing, and on this account frequent the neighbourhood of streams.

The note resembles the syllables 'tur, tur,' more or less often repeated, and more or less quickly—doubtless the origin of the name.

The nest is carelessly constructed of a few twigs and sticks, and is placed in trees at no great height from the ground—some ten or twenty feet—but well hidden among the foliage. It is, however, itself so slight, that the eggs may be seen through it.

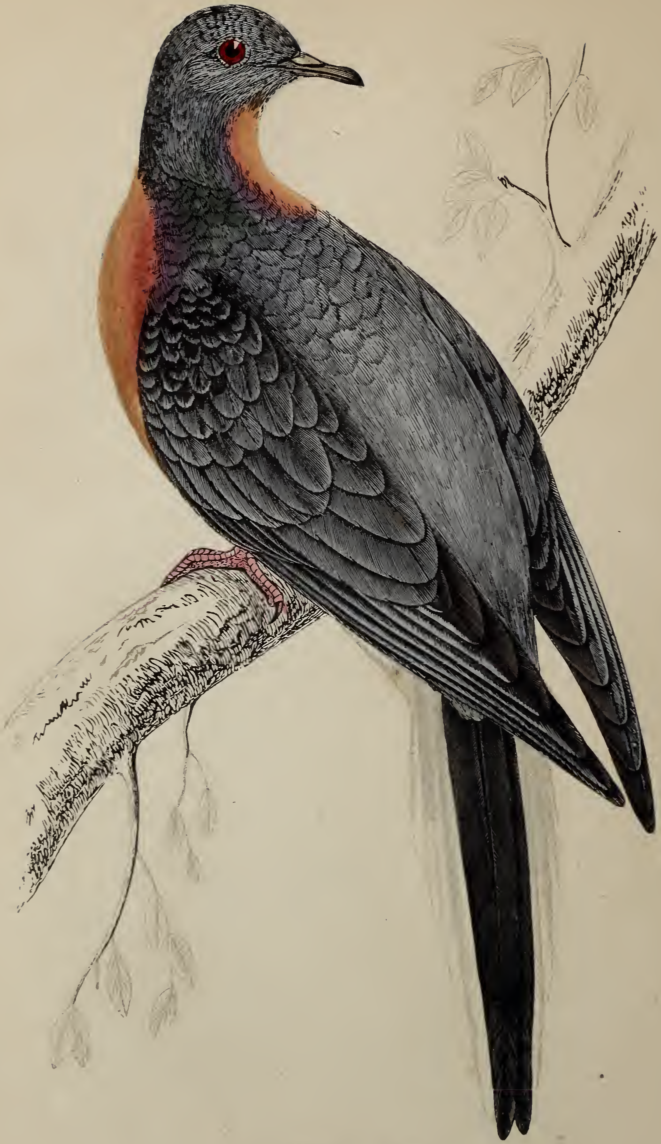
The eggs are two in number, and glossy white, of a narrow oval and rather pointed form. They are laid about the middle of May, and are hatched in sixteen or seventeen days. The female sits on the young, if the weather be cold, both night and day. Two and sometimes three broods are produced in the year. The young soon learn to shift for themselves.

Male; weight, rather more than six ounces; length, a trifle over one foot; bill, dark greyish black, the tip of the upper one yellowish brown: it is much compressed about the middle, and the end is hard in substance; inside it is reddish. Iris, bright orange yellowish red, the bare space around it light red—darker than in the female; head on the sides, yellowish, fading off into the pink of the neck and breast; on the crown, and neck on the back, light greyish blue; on the sides the latter has a rounded patch of black, each of the feathers tipped with white, surrounded with a tinge of blue; in front it is a delicate light purple red colour, fading off backwards into grey; chin, pale brown; throat and breast, delicate light purple red, bluish grey on the sides; back, greyish brown above, on the lower part brownish in colour.

The wings, one foot nine or ten inches in expanse, long and acute, have the second quill the longest, the first nearly as long, the third a little shorter than the first, the others rapidly diminishing in length; greater wing coverts, mostly grey, the others greyish brown, with narrow whitish edges; lesser wing coverts, edged with grey, with broad light reddish margins, and a central pointed black spot, the outer one bluish grey; primaries, greyish brown. The inner secondaries edged with grey, with broad light reddish margins, and a central pointed dark spot; the outer ones greyish brown, with narrow whitish edges; greater and lesser under wing coverts, bluish grey. The tail, long and much rounded, of twelve feathers, greyish brown, the two centre ones brown; all the others tipped with white, widest on the side feathers, the outer web of the side one white; underneath it is blackish brown, tipped with white; under tail coverts, white. Legs and toes, carmine red—the latter underneath dull yellowish; claws, blackish brown.

The female is less in size, and lighter-coloured.

The young, at first covered with yellow down, have, their first year, the bill dark brown; iris, dusky, till they are about half a year old, then it becomes by degrees yellow and orange: the red round the eye appears the second year; they assume also the black on the side of the neck the second year. Breast on the sides, bluish grey; back, darker brown than the neck in front; greater and lesser wing coverts, tipped with buff white; primaries, slightly tinged on their outer edges with rufous. Tail, brown, the lateral feathers with their outer webs, and the next two with their ends white; underneath it is blackish brown; under tail coverts, whitish. Legs, toes, and claws, brown.



PASSENGER PIGEON.

PASSENGER PIGEON.

Columba migratoria,	FLEMING. YARRELL.
Ectopistes migratorius,	SELBY.

Columba—A Pigeon. *Migratoria*—Migratory.

THIS Pigeon, far-famed on account of its extraordinary numbers, is a native of North America, from north to south. Captain Sir John Ross, R. N., mentions one which flew on board the Victory in Baffin's Bay, during a storm, in the 73½ degree of latitude, on the 31st. of July, 1829. It has been taken also in Europe, in Russia and Norway; and one was shot, while perched on a wall near a dove-cote, at Westhall, in the parish of Monymeal, Fifeshire, Scotland, on the 31st. of December, 1825.

The Passenger Pigeon, as imported by its name, is of migratory habits in its native country.

These birds may be kept in confinement, and a pair built and hatched their young in the menagerie of the Zoological Society in the year 1833, and another pair about the same time in that of Lord Derby, at Knowsley, in Lancashire. In their native regions their numbers seem to be almost incredibly vast; for miles and miles and miles flock follows after flock, and that so fast as scarcely to be able to be reckoned as they pass; Audubon counted one hundred and sixty-three flocks in twenty-one minutes. If a Hawk threatens them, their movements, he says, are singularly beautiful, as they wheel with the force of a torrent and a noise like thunder with inconceivable velocity in various changing figures, the whole mass gliding through the air as if a single living body. He gives a surprising account of the numbers in which, in their peregrinations, they are captured in the easiest manner in consequence of their dense propinquity to each other, and certainly the whole account gives a very 'high flown' representation of their flight.

Epitomising his calculations, Alexander Wilson says, 'Allowing two Pigeons to the square yard, we have one billion, one hundred and fifteen millions, one hundred and thirty-six thousand Pigeons in one flock, (flight;) and as every Pigeon consumes fully half a pint per day, the quantity required to feed such a flock, must be eight millions, seven hundred and twelve thousand bushels per day.'

Their flight is extraordinarily rapid. It has been conclusively proved that they have travelled, at the rate of about a mile in a minute, between three and four hundred miles in six hours.

Dr. Saynisch, a German naturalist, thus describes their nesting-places, and it certainly is corroborative of Audubon's account. 'The gathering together of these birds, for the purpose of incubation, was exhibited on a scale perfectly astonishing. For a length of nine miles they had occupied every tree and sapling in the whole breadth of the valley, which is from a quarter to a third of a mile wide. Thousands and millions of nests were seen on the beech, birch, and maple trees, every tree of which contained several nests; and I counted on some of them from twenty to fifty nests. Unlike most birds, they are said never to return to their nesting-places in a succeeding year; we therefore only saw their deserted nests; yet even these were interesting, as evidences of the countless numbers which had congregated here. During the season, when the young Pigeons or 'squabs' were ready to fly, their retirement was invaded by numerous persons, who filled sacks and carts with them; there requiring no other trouble than the shaking of the young trees, or cutting down those of greater size. This year the Pigeons established themselves in a new spot, in the beech woods, ten miles to the west.'

It would appear that the nest, which is placed in trees, and is only a layer of a few sticks, is put together in a single day, and that the young are hatched in sixteen days;—both male and female assisting in making the nest, the former bringing the materials, and the latter arranging them, and also in the work of incubation.

The egg, for only one is laid, is pure white.

Male; length, one foot five inches; bill, orange colour; iris, pale yellow. Head on the sides and crown, bluish grey;

neck on the sides, iridescent reddish chesnut, purple in some lights, and green in others; on the back, bluish grey; nape, brownish grey; chin, bluish grey; throat and breast, rich chesnut, paler lower down and on the sides; back, bluish grey.

The wings have the first and third quill feathers equal in length, longer than the fourth, but shorter than the second, which is the longest in the wing; greater and lesser wing coverts, bluish grey, with a few oblong spots of black; primaries, leaden grey, the outer margins paler, the shafts black; tertiaries, brownish grey. The tail, long and cuneiform, the four middle feathers the longest, tapering and pointed at the end; the four outer ones on each side graduated in length. The two middle ones are blackish brown; the next on each side white, tinged with grey on a portion of the outer web, and leaden grey at the base; the four outside feathers on each side white, partly tinged with grey, and at the base with leaden grey; upper tail coverts, bluish grey; under tail coverts, white. Legs and toes, rather long, and reddish orange in colour; claws, black.

The female is smaller than the male; length, about one foot four inches; her colours are less bright, and more tinged with brown.

PHEASANT.

COMMON PHEASANT. RING-NECKED PHEASANT.

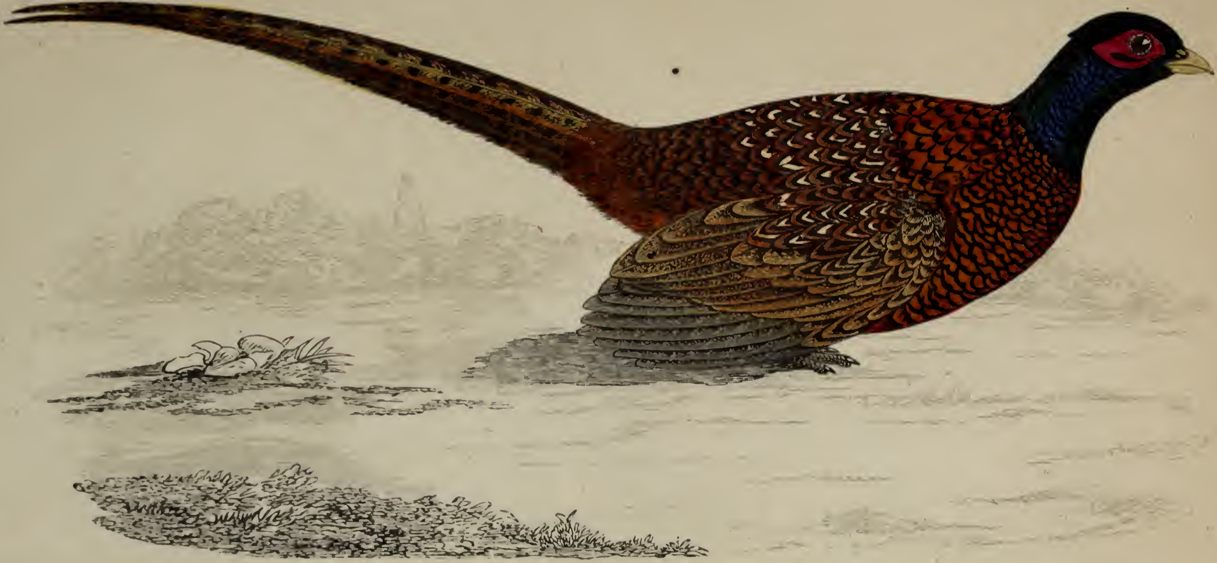
Phasianus Colchicus, LINNÆUS. LATHAM.

Phasianus—A Pheasant. *Colchicus*—Of Colchis.

IN treating of the game birds, I foresee that it will be difficult to confine myself strictly to their natural history. When one comes to think, to speak, or to write of the 'flood and field,' I ask any reader who has handled, though it may have been in days gone by, 'the rod and the gun,' whether nature and art are not here so closely connected together, that their confines are easily overstepped, and in fact one will be out of bounds, trespassing perhaps, before he knows or thinks where he is. I believe, indeed, that the old common law of England gives you leave and license to follow your game when struck, but——I must not forget that I am now holding the pen and no other implement, and must guide, and not be guided by, the 'grey goose wing.' I will only say that, as a magistrate for the East Riding of Yorkshire, I have always felt that a poacher, if not a really bad character, was not necessarily a being so utterly depraved, as to be deserving of nothing but to be prosecuted with the 'utmost rigour of the law.'

The Pheasant, though not strictly speaking one of our native birds, having been introduced formerly—it is supposed, as imported by its names, from the banks of the River Phasis, in Colchis, in Asia—yet, as now and long since naturalized among us, claims and receives a place accordingly in every natural history.

This splendid bird is plentiful in a great part of Europe—the north excepted, and in Asia, from the shores of the Black Sea to Tartary, Persia, the East Indies, China, and its northern region, the formerly famous and marvellous Cathay. It is



PHEASANT

common now throughout this country, as also pretty generally in Ireland; and in Scotland occurs even so far north as Sutherlandshire.

The favourite resorts of Pheasants are woods wherever situated, and whether larger or smaller, and thick plantations, especially if near rivers and marshy places, osier beds, and islands overrun with tangled vegetation, long grass, rushes, reeds, and brambles, and at times they resort to hedgerows. Their large size and conspicuous appearance render them an easy prey to prowling marauders on many a 'shiny night at the season of the year,' and their value for the table furnishes a strong incentive to take them, even if the natural instinct of the chase did not sufficiently provide it. The paths that they form in thickets, invite the treacherous snare, the air-gun can easily reach them on their visible roost, or even a noose at the end of a pole; should they fly, the difficulty is to miss them with a gun; and should any of these means not be resorted to, a villainous sulphur match will bring them down.

In the winter the males generally keep by themselves, and in spring, about March, again choose a domain and haunt of their own, strutting, crowing, and clapping their wings to the admiration of the females. The former are as they have need to be, more wary than the latter. One has been known in defence of his wives to attack and drive off a cat, which was accidentally approaching. Of another it is related by the Rev. Leonard Jenyns, that it was so bold and fierce, that it 'was accustomed to make frequent sallies upon persons passing near the place of its resort. I saw it myself fly boldly at the proprietor of the grounds, who purposely approached the spot, in order that I might witness the extent of its courage and ferocity; it commenced pecking his legs, and striking with its wings, pursuing him for a considerable distance down one of the walks. Some wood-cutters, who were at work close by, were in the habit of protecting their legs with strong leather gaiters from the attacks of this bird, which was constantly interrupting and annoying them in this manner.' Of another it is recorded that having roosted in the neighbourhood of a farm-yard, where game fowls were kept, it killed three cocks in succession, but was slain by a fourth, which the owner armed with spurs for protection. Another went into a farm-yard, and for several months kept company with the hens there, making his appearance at daybreak, and retiring into the woods to roost at night.

The cock Pheasant deserts the hen as soon as the eggs are laid, and she alone has the rearing of the young.

When fed in hard weather, they learn to come at the call of the keeper. The hen will sometimes hatch her eggs in confinement. They are foolish birds, and one has been known to 'run farther into the danger, than try to get out of it, and await its fate with patient stupidity, without the least attempt to extricate itself.'

The male Pheasant is polygamous, having from six to nine mates. Its natural habits confine it to the ground, and there it roosts in the summer and autumn, among long grass or bushes; but in the winter commonly in trees at a height of ten or twenty feet from the ground; in the early spring the hen roosts near the cock, either in the same tree or in some one close to it, whose shelter it also seeks at other times if alarmed. In the early part of the winter open trees are resorted to, but in more severe weather, those of an evergreen kind—hollies and firs. In strictly preserved places, they often derive boldness from conscious security, and display but very little fear of man.

Its flight is straight, laboured, and heavy, performed by quick flappings of the wings; the tail expanded: in descending, it steadies its wings and sails before alighting. A considerable sound is made by its first rising. They run very fast on occasion, and if alarmed, either speed into the nearest cover or take wing. If not disturbed, but feeding quietly, they move about leisurely, running every now and then, the wings rather drooped, and the tail nearly straight, but rather more elevated than at other times.

It feeds on cereal grain of the various kinds, and beans, beech-mast, chesnuts, acorns, blackberries, sloes, hips and haws, and other small wild fruits; also the shoots and leaves of various plants, turnip tops, and grass, the roots of the golden buttercup, and of various grasses and bulbous plants; worms, grasshoppers, gnats, and other insects. It does a large amount of damage in its consumption of the first-named: where there are ant-hills, the hen bird leads her young to them, in the grass-fields, and afterwards into those of corn. Mr. Macgillivray found a quantity of a species of fern in one. If they come into a garden, they devour grapes, potatoes, carrots, cabbages, and turnips, and scratch the ground in search of food. They are particularly fond of sunflower seeds and buckwheat.

The crow of the Pheasant, which bears but an humble resemblance to the 'Cock's shrill clarion,' is begun to be heard in March, and then frequently in April and May. The hen in like manner utters a low chirp—a 'tshee,' when startled to take wing, and a slight call on the appearance of any danger. The cocks crow at all hours of the day, from the time of quitting their night's roost to the time of their again retiring to rest, and in the autumn early in the morning or late at night. They are particularly excited by thunder or any other loud noise, such as the blasting of rocks, or the firing of cannon, even when so distant, as has been observed, as thirty miles; while their own crowing in concert on such occasions may be heard, it is said, at a distance of two miles. The explosion of Curtis and Harvey's powder mills, at Hounslow, was answered by them at a distance of fifty miles, as witnessed by A. E. Knox, Esq. 'The Common Pheasant, as is well known,' says the Rev. Leonard Jenyns, 'betrays the place of his repose by his repeated crowing; the cock bird, for the hen appears to be nearly mute on these occasions, springs from the ground on to the tree selected for roosting with a harsh scream or chuckle, that continues unremitted till he has assumed his perch; it is then softened into a more harmonious crow, consisting of two, and in some cases three notes, which are repeated at intervals for a considerable time. Besides his cry, which is heard to a considerable distance, there is a weak inward noise immediately following, which sounds exactly like an echo of the first, consisting of the same notes only in a different key, and uttered very softly.'

The nest, a very slight fabrication of a few leaves, is made upon the ground, sometimes in the open fields, but more commonly in woods and plantations, among underwood, under fallen or felled boughs and branches of trees, in long grass, and in hedgerows.

The eggs are begun to be laid in April and May, one after another for four, five, or six weeks, and incubation lasts from twenty-four to twenty-six days. They are from six to ten and even fourteen in number, smooth, and of a light olive brown colour minutely dotted all over. Some are greyish white tinged with green. The hen sits for four and twenty hours on the brood after they are hatched, which takes place in June or July, and they keep with her till they begin to moult to the full plumage. They soon learn to run about with her, and when half grown begin to roost on the same tree. It would appear that two hens will sometimes lay in one and the same nest, and also that that of the Partridge will occasionally be made use of, even if it already contain eggs, the Pheasant expelling their proper owner, and hatching them with her own, and bringing up the young. The eggs are subject to considerable malformation. Mr. Hewitson mentions one sent to him by the Hon. Mrs. Liddel, which was of a cylindrical shape.

Male; weight, very variable—from two pounds and a half to three pounds, and even, in some instances, over four pounds; length, two feet ten inches to two feet eleven. Bill, whitish or pale yellowish, or pale greenish horn-colour, the base rather darker. The eye is surrounded by a bare skin of a bright scarlet colour, minutely speckled with bluish black: in parts it approaches deep red, and in some seasons, crimson. Iris, pale yellowish orange, with a tinge of brown, the eyelids flesh-coloured: over the ear is a small tuft of dark golden-green feathers, set out in the spring. Head on the crown, deep brownish green, with yellowish marginal edgings, the feathers rather elongated and silky; neck behind, deep green, and on the sides and in front, greenish blue and purple blue, alternately reflecting burnished shades of green, purple, and brown, in different lights. Throat and breast above, dark golden red, each feather margined with glossy black and reflecting tints of gold and purple; lower down, brownish black glossed with green, the margins of the feathers being of the latter colour, and in young birds tinged with reddish. Back, on the upper part dark orange red, within which is a yellowish white band, the feathers margined with velvet black, and with a central oblong spot of the same; lower down dark orange red, the centre of each feather dark, with an outer band of pale yellow, with spots of light blue and purple, then light brownish red, the feathers elongated, with loose filaments.

The wings, rounded in form, and of twenty-four quills, expand to the width of two feet eight inches; the third and fourth quills are the longest, the first equal to the seventh: underneath, the wings are yellowish green. Greater and lesser wing coverts, red of two shades, the inner dark, the outer yellowish grey, variegated with dusky and whitish; primaries, dull greyish brown, varied with pale greyish yellow; secondaries, broad, rounded, and a little shorter than the primaries, and more tinged with brown on the outer edges. The tail is slightly arched, and of eighteen feathers; the two middle ones frequently measure as much as two feet—more or less according to age. It is pale yellowish brown with a tinge of green, with narrow transverse black bars about an inch apart, and a broad border of dull red on each side, the loose margins glossed with green and purple: the outer feathers are the shortest, and the shafts dusky; upper tail coverts, light brownish red; under tail coverts, variegated with reddish. The legs, light brownish lead-colour, have conical spurs behind, about a quarter of an inch long, dull the first year: 'they have about seventeen plates in each of their anterior series.' Toes, light brownish lead-colour; the first one, which is very small, with five, the second with twelve, the third twenty-two, the fourth nineteen scales, or thereabouts. Claws, brown.

The female resembles the male. Length, two feet two inches; bill, horn-colour, tinged with green: over the eye is a bare space, but more feathered than in the male; the head has the feathers on the crown somewhat elongated and tinged with red; neck on the back and nape, yellowish brown tinged with red; throat and breast, paler and less mottled than in the male; back, greyish yellow, variegated with black and yellowish brown. The wings extend to the width of two feet six inches; primaries, pale greyish brown, mottled with greyish yellow; the tail is much shorter than in the male; it is yellowish grey, minutely mottled with black, and with oblique irregular spots of black, with a pale yellow line on the centre of each feather. The legs, brown, have about seventeen scales in each row; the toes, darker brown; the first toe, says Macgillivray, has five scales, the second nine to fifteen, the third twenty-two, the fourth seventeen or eighteen. Claws, dark brown.

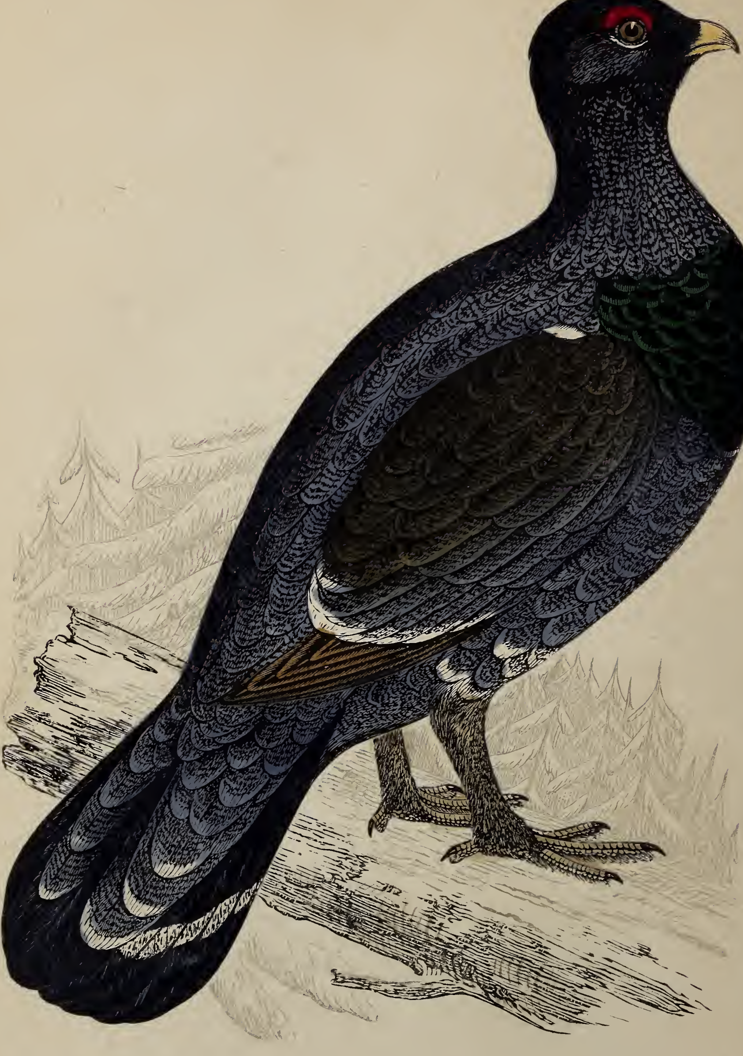
The young of the year, in their first plumage, resemble the females; being of a dull greyish yellow, variegated with brown and black. The females are the dullest, and the space under the eye is more feathered.

The Pheasant is far from unfrequently found with more or less variegation of plumage. It appears unquestionable that this, as might not unnaturally be expected as the result of some constitutional infirmity, is in many instances, though not in all, transmitted from the parent to the offspring; in some, part of the progeny are pied, and part of the ordinary colour. Pied young have been known to be produced from a white male and a female of the proper colour; their descendants in the following year were only white or pied, and the varieties went on year after year. Doubtless in many cases the destruction of the old birds, signalled out for their very markings, is the reason of the non-production of other such; 'ex nihilo nihil fit.'

The Ring-necked specimens are rather lighter-plumaged than the Ringless. One variety, by no means uncommon, especially in the female, is entirely white, and even the bill and legs. One had a single coloured feather under the throat, another, one or two only on the shoulders; a hen bird in the cock's plumage, even the white ring round the back and sides of the neck, is another. Individuals more or less mottled, patched, and speckled with white are by no means unfrequent. A variety called the Bohemian Pheasant is of a stone-colour, with the usual markings Cream-coloured ones are also met with. One is mentioned by G. B. Clarke, Esq., in 'The Naturalist,' volume ii., page 182, which had a silvery appearance when the sun shone on it, and the tail was of a darker colour than usual: it was shot in Woburn Park.

The hen bird sometimes partially assumes the plumage of the cock, and in these cases says Yarrell, 'they may be known by their partial want of brilliancy of tint; the golden-red feathers on the breast generally want the contrast of the broad dark velvet-like margin; the legs and feet retaining their smaller and more slender female character, and are without spurs.'

Hybrids have occurred from alliances with the Common Fowl, the Black Grouse, the Turkey, the Guinea Fowl, the Golden Pheasant, and the Silver Pheasant.



CAPERCALI.

CAPERCAILLIE.

WOOD GROUSE.

Tetrao urogallus,	PENNANT. MONTAGU.
Urogallus major,	BRISSON.

Tetrao—From the Hindoostanee. *Urogallus. Urus*—A bull. *Gallus*—A Cock.

THIS chieftain Grouse, the pride of the northern forest, has long since disappeared from the scene where his race for ages dwelt: the gallant Capercailzie of Scotland is no more. The year '45' was a 'memorable' one in the records of the clan, for then he last was seen in Strath Spey, though he held his own in Strath Glass and Glen Moriston till 1769. The warning to Lochiel might have been applied to the bird, the 'Lowlands' proved the destruction of both. Still he claims a place in my 'History of British Birds,' and though the native branch of his family is extinct, collateral ones continue to hold sway in other lands, and individuals from them have several times been introduced with a view to their re-naturalization here, and with some success. In 1838 and 1839, Lord Breadalbane received fifty-four adult birds from Norway; and their descendants in large numbers dignify the old woods about Taymouth Castle, Drummond Hill, Kenmore Hill, Croftmorraig Hill, and others, and several move down every year to Strath Tay, Blair Athol, Dunkeld and Crieff, so that the 'king of the game birds may now be said to be restored to his hereditary dominions.' Lord Fyfe also introduced a pair at Mar Lodge, about the beginning of January, 1828, and a second pair in February 1839. The Duchess of Athol had some sent to her at Blair. They are said to have been formerly found in Ireland.

The Capercaillie inhabits the northern countries of Europe, as far as the pine tree flourishes, which is very nearly to the

North Cape itself: the forests of this and other species are its resort. It is the most plentiful in Norway, and very scarce in the southern parts of Sweden. It is found in Jutland, Russia, Norway, Prussia, Siberia, Poland, Germany, Livonia, and Hungary; it is said also to occur on the Pyrenees on the borders of Spain, on the Appenine range in Italy, in Switzerland, Greece, and some of the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, and in Upper Alsace: in France it is rare. It is found also in Asia—in Tartary.

Professor Nillson says that in the larger forests it remains all the year round; but that those which inhabit the sides of mountains, or any more open part of the country, descend in hard weather to lower ground.

The Capercaillie is for the most part on the ground, though commonly also he perches on the trees, and the latter especially in time of snow. He generally roosts at sunset in trees, but is also said to shelter himself in the snow. He is of shy habits, and is difficult to rise, running off on the slightest alarm. His favourite haunt is in the depth of the forest of the pine, the beech, and the oak, among tangled brushwood, fallen trees, and rude rocks; in these indeed he is alone found. Combats occasionally take place between the males. The young cocks do not attain their full growth till the third year, or upwards. They are frequently domesticated, so much so as to feed out of the hand, and have been known to breed in confinement. They at times, however, become fierce and will attack people, and one has even been known to do so in the wild state, battling with any intruders on his wood. Another had the same habit, and was removed to a distance of fourteen miles, but the next day he was back at his old place. They will occasionally breed with the Black Grouse. In their manners they are said to be dull and heavy, but the females less so than the males, and also less shy. Meyer says that if surprised, she crouches flat to the ground with her brood, and if approached closely, she and they fly off to the lower boughs of some tree, and do not wait then for a second approach. The male, he adds, is very unsociable, roving about by himself till the spring, when he joins his mates for a few weeks, and then returns to his former habits, leaving the females to take care of the nests, eggs, and broods.

As a game bird, it is of course made use of for the table, but is not particularly good eating; the eggs, however, are so. It will keep, when dried, for a year. Abroad, they are caught in traps, and also are watched for by gunners, who lie in wait for them all night, and in the morning steal a march upon them while engaged in singing, as their noise is also called, pausing when they cease, and drawing nearer again when they re-commence. These birds are generally found in packs at the beginning and during the continuance of winter, dispersing again with the return of spring. The packs are said to consist sometimes of as many as fifty or a hundred birds, and to frequent the sides of the lakes and morasses which abound in the northern forests.

Their flight is said to be not particularly heavy or noisy, considering their size, and they can take a flight of several miles at a time. The wings are clapped very quickly together. In walking the body is carried in a horizontal position, the tail drooped, and the head stretched out. If need be they can run fast.

These birds feed on grain, juniper berries, cranberries, blaeberries, and other berries, and the leaves of small shrubs, the buds of the birch and other trees, and insects, and also, but probably only in winter and the early months, the males it is said, the most so, on the leaves of the fir, which impart a perceptible flavour to them: they drink frequently. The young are at first fed with ants, worms, and insects.

The play of the Capercaillie, for so is his note called, is harsh and grating, and is said to resemble the syllables 'peller, peller, peller.' It is made from the first dawn of day to sunrise, and from a little after sunset till it is quite dark; but it is dependant on the state of the season. While playing, his neck is stretched out, the tail raised and spread, the wings drooped, and the feathers ruffled out, and he seems absorbed in his thoughts, and may be more easily approached than at other times. 'These sounds he repeats at first at some little intervals, but as he proceeds they increase in rapidity, until at last, and after perhaps the lapse of a minute or so, he makes a sort of a gulp in his throat, and finishes by drawing in his breath. During the continuance of this latter process, which only lasts a few seconds, the head of the Capercaillie is thrown up, his eyes are partially closed, and his whole appearance would denote that he is worked up into an agony of passion.' The voice of the female resembles the sound 'gock, gock, gock,'—a call to her mate and to the young. Old birds will not permit the young, even of the second year, to play. If, however, the old birds be killed, the young ones in a day or two usually begin to call. This they do in certain stations or playing grounds, to which they keep for years together. Several may be heard playing at the same time on these playing grounds. The hen birds assemble at the call, and the chanter then descends from the tree. He does not play from the same tree every day; and is seldom to be met with on the same spot for two days together.

About the beginning of May nidification commences, and the nest, composed of grasses and leaves, is made upon the ground, in long grass or heather, under the shelter of a tree, or bramble or other bush.

The eggs are from half a dozen to a dozen in number, of a pale reddish yellow brown, spotted oll over with two shades of orange brown. Incubation is said to last for a month, the hen alone sitting, the males keeping in the neighbourhood. If danger approaches, she runs off a little way, but returns again as soon as she can with safety. The young leave the nest soon after they are hatched, and keep with the mother bird till towards the approach of winter; the cocks leaving her before the hens.

Male; weight, from nine or ten to thirteen or even seventeen pounds; length, two feet nine or ten, to three feet four inches; bill, much hooked, the upper extending over the end and sides of the lower one, both whitish horn-colour; the skin over the bill is cast at certain seasons; iris, hazel; over it is a crescent-shaped bare patch of bright scarlet, and under it a small mark of white feathers. Head and crown, the feathers of which are rather elongated, neck on the back and in front, and nape, brownish black, minutely freckled with greyish white; chin and throat, the feathers of which are rather elongated, and able to be raised at will, greyish black. Breast above, dark shining green, the base of the feathers black; lower down, brownish black with a few white spots on the tips of the feathers; on the sides waved with grey and black: there is a white spot on the shoulder. Back, dark ash-colour marked with black.

The wings, of twenty-eight quills, and expanding to the width of four feet four inches, in some specimens only to four feet, have the first feather, which is intermediate between the seventh and eighth, two inches shorter than the second, and the second one inch shorter than the third, and the fourth and fifth nearly equal, the fourth the longest, Yarrell says the fifth, greater and lesser wing coverts, dark reddish brown, freckled with light brown, darker or not with the age of the bird; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dark greyish brown, half of the outer webs of the second, third, fourth, and fifth quills are white, the outer webs of the secondaries are waved with reddish brown, and slightly tipped with white; greater and lesser under wing coverts, white, excepting some of the outer ones.

The tail, rather long, and much rounded, consists of eighteen feathers, black, with some irregular white marks, and one interrupted white bar near the end; upper tail coverts, partially tipped with white; the outer feathers longer than the middle; under tail coverts, greyish black spotted with white on the tips. Legs, grey, covered with downy feathers, above the knee greyish brown tipped with white, below greyish brown minutely waved with reddish brown; toes, bare of feathers and dark greyish brown, and strongly pectinated; claws, blunt and blackish brown.

Female; weight, from five to six pounds; length, two feet two inches; bill, dusky brown; iris, hazel; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, dark brown, barred and freckled with yellow brown and black. Throat and breast, yellowish chesnut, the feathers of the latter margined with black, and with an edging of greyish white. Primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dusky, mottled on the outer webs with light brown. Tail, dark rust-colour, barred with black and tipped with white; under tail coverts, with broader edges of white. Legs, greyish brown; toes and claws, pale brown.

The young at first resemble the female, the males slowly gaining their proper plumage.

The hybrid between this species and and the Black Grouse has the bill black, the shining feathers on the neck of a rich plum-colour, and the outer feathers of the tail the longest.

BLACK GROUSE.

BLACK GAME. BLACK COCK.

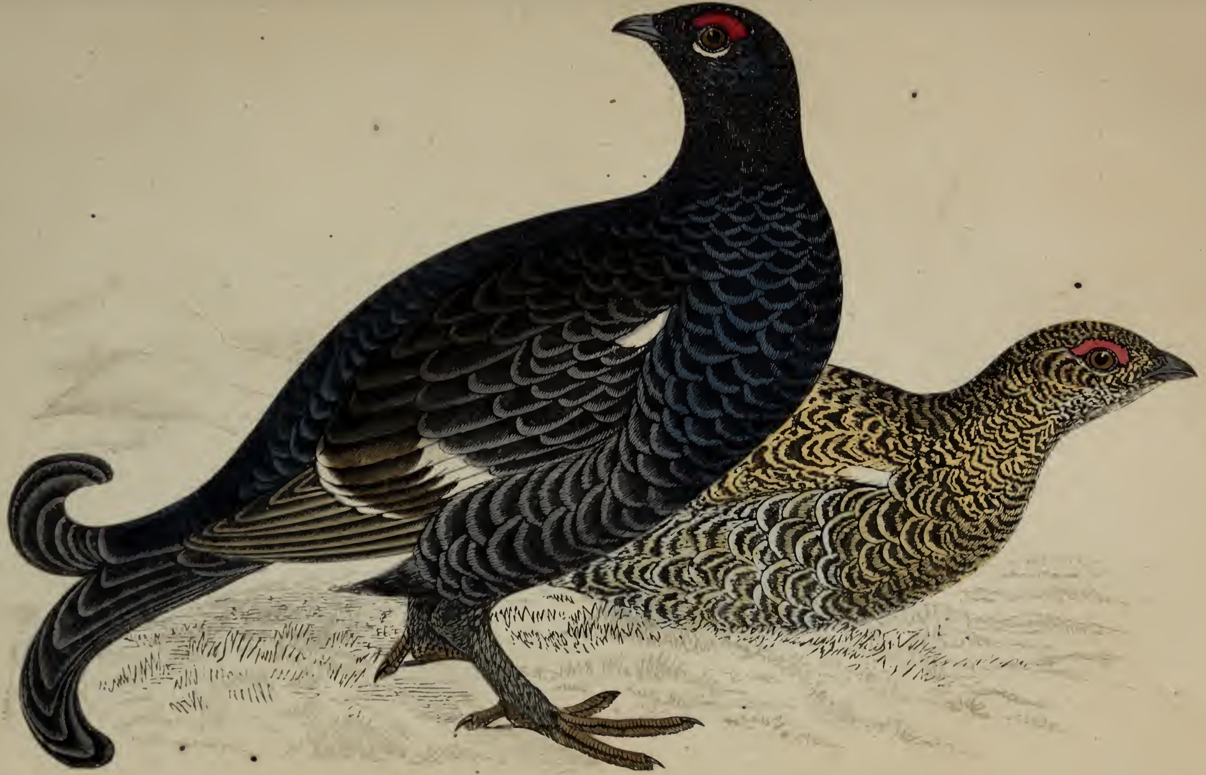
Tetrao tetrix,	PENNANT. MONTAGU.
Urogallus minor,	RAY. WILLOUGHBY.

Tetrao—(*Quære,* from the Hindoostanee *Teetur.*) *Tetrix*—The same?

'IT is a reverend thing,' says Bacon, 'to see an ancient castle or building not in decay, or to see a fair timber tree sound and perfect; how much more to behold an ancient family which hath stood against the waves and weathers of time.' While we utter a 'lament,' then, over the lost clan of the Capercailzie, let us at least boast ourselves of his still surviving cousin, the largest of our present game fowl, conspicuous for his size and jet black plumage, is a noble bird.

Black Grouse are common in Russia, Siberia, and Lapland, and are found in Germany, Poland, Holland, France, Switzerland, and Italy along the Alps.

In Yorkshire they are tolerably plentiful in some woods near Sheffield, and one was captured in a street of that town, in 1843; one was taken at Hebden Bridge, one near Heptonstall, and one near Lightcliffe: in Northumberland they are very abundant. Individuals have at different times been turned out in Norfolk, and a few are still occasionally met with in these localities; a female was shot at Clenchwarton, near Lynn, about the last week in April, 1852. In Somersetshire, they breed on the Quantock and Blackdown Hills, near Taunton, and also in Devonshire. A grey hen was observed in Northamptonshire, in September, 1849, near Cranford, the seat of Sir George Robinson, Bart., and afterwards near Grafton Park; the following May and June, her nest containing ten eggs was observed. In Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire, and the New Forest, Hampshire, it is also



BLACK GROUSE.

located; one, a grey hen, is recorded by J. B. Ellman, Esq., in the "Zoologist," page 3330, as having been caught near Lewes, Sussex, on the 30th. of October, 1851: the cock bird was seen at the same time. One, a female, was shot near Hampton Court, Herefordshire, the seat of J. Arkwright, Esq., in March, 1850; another, also a female, was found dead at Elvedon, in Suffolk, on the 12th. of October, 1844; a male had been seen in the adjoining parish the first week in September. One was captured on Urchfont Down, near Devizes, Wiltshire, in April, 1851, by a gamekeeper of Lord Broughton De Gifford; one shot near Forest Hill, Oxfordshire, in October, 1836. They breed regularly near Axmouth, Devonshire; and also on Exmoor, Dartmoor, and Sedgemoor.

These birds have now become quite localized in various parts of the neighbourhood of Windermere, Westmorland, having made their first appearance in that district in 1845. They are found in Surrey, in St. Leonard's Forest, near Horsham, Tilford, and Hindhead, Farnham, Bagshot, Guildford, and Dorking, celebrated for another breed of fowl, and in which neighbourhood, at Hurtford, in the year 1815, H. M. Thornton, Esq., of Chobham, also recently so famous for the military camp there, turned out five birds: the race had before existed there, but had been extinct about fifty years. They are found also in Shropshire, near Corwen, and in other parts, and in Staffordshire, and, it is said, in Worcestershire and Lancashire, and near Finchamstead, in Berkshire.

In Scotland it is abundant in Sutherlandshire, Dumfriesshire, and Galloway, and in many other parts, and some of its Islands—Mull, Skye, and others, and Selby says, in some of the Hebrides. It is also met with in some parts of Wales, where it is strictly preserved.

Its natural resorts are the lower parts of hills and valleys where there is a natural growth of birch, alder, and willow trees, and a wild vegetation prevails of fern and heather, woods and herbage affording it a shelter, and also water, near which it is only to be found, whether the morass or the mountain stream.

It is a singular circumstance in the natural history of this bird, as pointed out to me by Mr. D. M. Falconer, of Loan Head, Edinburgh, that the female does not begin to breed until three years. This fact he seems, by the account he has sent to me, to have established. If alarmed, they fly off to a place of security, or drop and remain motionless till the danger has passed. In the winter and the early part of the spring, they are more shy than at other times. They are fine eating. The male birds are polygamous, and after leaving the females and the young, keep by themselves in small flocks in the autumn and winter, living amicably together; some, however, rejoin the broods, and may be seen basking in the sun with them on the hill side in the middle of the day, but in the spring the 'organ of combativeness' is developed, and they exhibit considerable animosity towards each other, and may at such times be easily approached, when intent on battle. In these conflicts they fight in the same manner as the game cock, with tail raised and spread and the head lowered, each leaping up against his match, and striking at him. The winner takes possession of the homestead he has won, and there, no 'Noir Fainéant,' each morning and evening he gallantly struts, trailing his wings over the ground, and with outspread tail, throat puffed out, and the brilliant wattle swelled, both challenges with his harsh note the admiration of the females, and bids defiance to all comers.

They are restless and wild before rain. Both birds endeavour to draw away intruders from the brood, and the hen is the first to rise after running some way off, and then in an apparently disabled manner. At the beginning of the season they lie very close, so as often to allow themselves to be taken with the hand, but later on they go in packs, and become very wild; sometimes hundreds assemble together. It has been attempted to domesticate them, but without success.

They fly in a heavy manner, and in a direct line, at a tolerably fast rate, and can on occasion proceed to a considerable distance. Their proper station is on the ground, where they walk about nimbly enough, and also roost at night, but they can perch adroitly on the branches of trees, and move about among them. They may often be seen in spring on the top of a low wall.

They feed on juniper berries, bilberries, blaeberries, cranberries, whortle berries, crow berries, and other mountain fruits throughout the summer, as also on the fresh twigs of heather, ling, and other shrubs; in the spring on the tops of the cotton grass, willow catkins, grasses, rushes, heath-sedge, and buds of trees, the alder, the willow, and others; and in the winter on soft twigs of all kinds, including fir, the leaves of the turnip and rape, and even, Sir William Jardine says, on fern. They will scratch away the snow to uncover their food. Sometimes in summer they make inroads into the corn-fields, and devour barley and other grain, as also insects and ants' eggs, with which the young are fed.

The Black Cock in the spring, about the middle of March, pairing going on then, and in April and May, utters a growling kind of note, as well as a squeal or scream.

The nest is placed not far from water, or in a marshy spot, among heath, or in newly-made plantations, and sometimes in hedgerows, generally under the shelter of some low bush or among high grass, in some hollow, and is composed inartificially, but neatly, of grass and a few twigs laid together.

The eggs are from five to eight or ten in number, of a pale yellowish red or yellowish white colour, irregularly spotted and dotted with reddish brown. They are laid in May.

In the male the colours are a little lighter or deeper according to the season. Weight, nearly four pounds; length to the end of the side tail feathers, one foot ten or eleven inches, or from that to two feet; bill, brownish black; iris, dark brown, over it is a bare space of deep red, richest in spring, and under it a white mark; the eyelids pale yellowish brown, are thinly covered with very small feathers. Head, crown, neck on the back and nape, deep glossy purple bluish black; chin, throat, and breast, brownish black, on the lower part the feathers tipped with white; back, deep glossy purple bluish black.

The wings short, expanding to the width of two feet six to two feet nine inches, broad, and much rounded, and of twenty-five quills, have the fourth the longest, the third and fifth almost as long, the second longer than the seventh, the first longer than the eighth, and about the same length as the seventh; greater and lesser wing coverts, black, partially white at the base; primaries, deep brownish black, with brownish white shafts, the inner ones white at the base; secondaries and tertiar es, white at the base, and slightly tipped with whitish, forming a bar and band—brownish black at the end; greater and lesser under wing coverts, excepting those on the outer edge of the wing, white, a few of them shewing at the bend when the wing is closed. The tail is of eighteen black feathers, three, four, or five of the outer ones on each side gradually elongated and turned outwards in the form of a lyre; upper tail coverts, brownish black; under tail coverts, white. Legs, short, feathered with hair-like feathers in front, and on the sides speckled with white, and covered behind with rounded scales; toes, rather small, brownish black, bare of feathers, and with lateral fringes; the first is very small, the second and fourth nearly equal, the third much longer, the front ones connected by short scaly membranes; on the first toe there are ten, on the second eighteen, on the third thirty, on the fourth twenty-two, narrow plates. Claws, blackish brown.

The female, called the Grey Hen, is in weight about two pounds; length, one foot five or six inches: bill, brown; iris, hazel, over the eye there is a narrow red mark; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, yellowish red, barred with brownish black, each feather on the head with three, and on the neck with four bars of the latter; chin, throat, and breast, yellowish red, barred with brownish black, the bars larger and curved, the ends greyish white, the sides more red; below it is greyish white, barred with black and brown; the back above, yellowish red, more broadly barred, the last bar forming a pointed patch; on the lower part it is of a deeper red, barred with brownish black.

The wings have a tuft of white feathers at the bend, as in the male; they expand to the width of two feet seven inches; greater wing coverts, greyish brown, their edges mottled with red, the middle ones tipped with white; primaries, greyish brown, also mottled on their edges with red; secondaries, greyish brown, more widely mottled with red, and undulated, and their tips white. The tail, very short, has the four outer feathers a little longer than the others, but almost straight, the tip greyish white; upper tail coverts, also darker yellowish red, conspicuously barred with brownish black; under tail coverts, greyish white, partially marked with irregular patches of brown and red along the centre towards the end. Legs, greyish white, obscurely mottled with reddish and blackish; toes and claws, brown.

The young do not entirely lose their early plumage till towards the following year.

In a considerable number of instances this species has been known to pair with the Pheasant, in a few with the Red Grouse, and in one with the Common Fowl; also with the Capercaillie, and, though very rarely, with the Ptarmigan. In some instances the female has assumed to a considerable extent the plumage of the male. Sir William Jardine mentions one, shot by the late Sir Sidney Beckwith, entirely of a whitish grey, having the cross markings of a darker and browner shade.

One, a hybrid between the Black Cock and the Capercaillie, partaking in part of the plumage of each, was obtained on the Marquis of Breadalbane's moors in Perthshire, about September, 1852.

RED GROUSE.

GOR-COCK. MOOR-COCK. MOOR-FOWL. MUIR-FOWL.

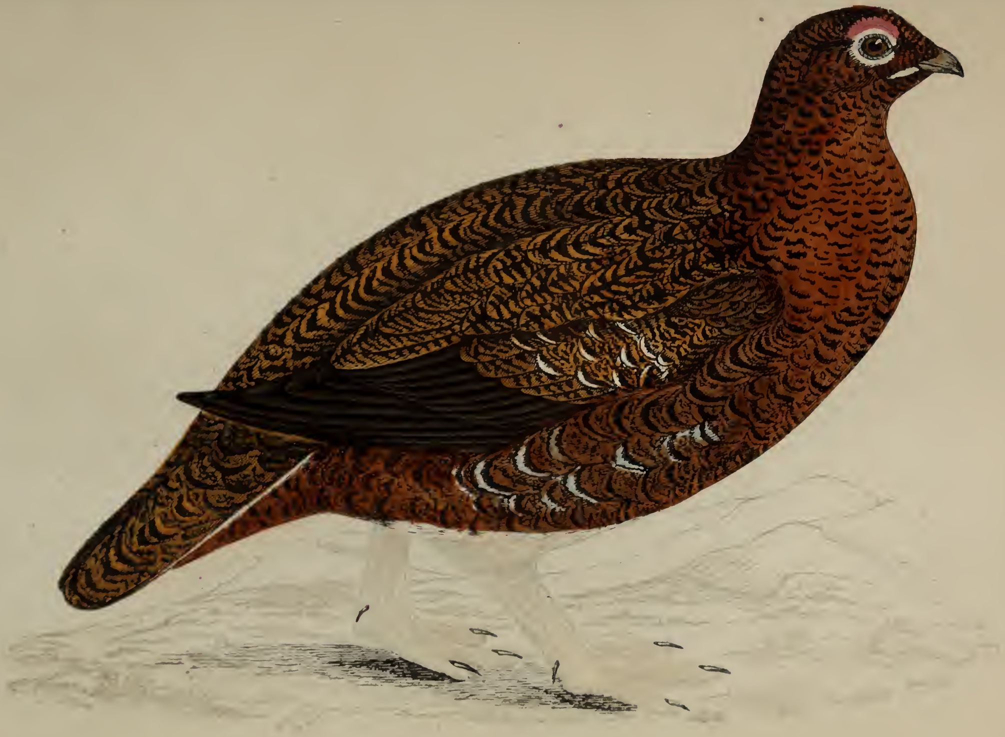
Lagopus Scoticus,	VIELLOT.
Tetrao Scoticus,	LATHAM.

Lagopus. *Lagos*—A hare. *Pous*—A foot. *Scoticus*—Scotch.

THE hardy Grouse, coeval with the Ancient British of these islands, is alone to be met with here. It is a native of various parts of England and Wales, but is, as indicated by its specific name, especially abundant in Scotland, not only in the north, in Sutherlandshire and Rosshire, but on the Grampian central ranges, and in the south on the Pentland Hills, the Lammermuir, immortalized by Sir Walter Scott for the fatal bridal, and the mountains of Peeblesshire, Selkirkshire, and Dumfriesshire. In the Hebrides it is likewise plentiful, and in Orkney it is found in various parts of the mainland, in Hoy, Waas, Ronsay, and Eday. In Ireland it is met with in most suitable localities.

The red bird, like the Red Indian, gives way before the inroads of cultivation, and flourishes only where nature is yet to be seen in her primitive aspect. Attempts have been made to re-establish the Ancient Briton in Devonshire Dorsetshire, Sussex, and Surrey, but in vain; aboriginal inhabitants, like my own ancestors in ages long gone by, before Roman, Saxon, Dane, or Norman had set foot on the soil, when once driven into the fastnesses of Wales and the wild districts of the country, there alone they can yet maintain their tribe.

H. R. H. the Duke of Gloucester turned out eight brace and a half on Bagshot Heath in 1829, but, excepting two killed two years afterwards on Cobham Heath, nothing more was seen of them, though every precaution had been taken to



RED GROUSE.

secure their stay. One was killed in Norfolk many years since near Downham, and one in 1794 near Wedhampton, in Wiltshire.

In the wild state they abound, in certainly a remarkable degree considering the vast numbers that are shot every year, wherever there is sufficiently long heather, which affords them both home and food. The nature of the latter imparts a peculiar bitter flavour to them, but the taste for it is soon acquired, and there is hardly a better game bird. They prefer drier places to the low and swampy. In the more remote parts of Scotland they are looked upon as birds of good omen, and their morning crow is considered as a signal for the dark spirits of the night to take their departure. They are capable of being kept in a state of domestication, and in some instances have been known to breed in captivity; one pair in the aviary of the Dowager Duchess of Portland, and another pair at Mr. Grierson's, of Rathfarnham, in the county of Dublin; Lord Stanley also had a pair which laid ten eggs and brought out eight young: they had had a brood the year before he obtained them.

The Grouse frequents the higher, but not the highest, parts of the heather-clad mountains, as likewise the hills and moors, and also is found in the level country if interspersed with heath. Archibald Hepburn, Esq. mentions in the 'Zoologist,' page 186, his having in one instance known a hen bird among bent-covered sand hills, six miles from the nearest heath, and there she brought up a brood of young. In winter they for the most part descend to lower ranges from the higher ones. They generally go in pairs, but a single bird is often seen; when the snow is on the ground they congregate in flocks. In the spring the cock is pugnacious among his fellows, but not so much so as many other kindred birds; at that time he is very bold, and seems to scorn fear, as perched upon some old wall or hillock he crows aloud or struts about, even though you pass quite close.

If disturbed from the nest, on which, however, she will often sit till about trodden upon, the hen Grouse will shuffle through the heath in an awkward and apparently disabled manner, or fly with a low and undecided flight to a little distance, and then run off among it, and will not take wing till she has proceeded to a considerable distance, in the endeavour to allure the intruder to follow her; sometimes she even falls a sacrifice to her careful anxiety: the male does not sit.

Both parents, when the young are hatched, attend to their wants, and both will attempt to defend them against enemies, and even the Scaul-crow is sometimes beaten off. Towards the beginning of winter several flocks often unite together, to the number of thirty or forty, forming what are called packs, and are then more shy than previously. In severe winters these packs accumulate into very large bodies: in 1782-3 it is said by Thornton that four thousand were observed together.

Their flight, for the most part low and heavy, but strong, and often extended to a considerable distance, is straight, accompanied by a whirring of the wings, which are rapidly moved, and at times, especially if declining along the mountain side, they sail with outstretched and motionless pinions. They do not ordinarily fly much, but prefer the concealment of the heath, a natural protection against their various natural enemies, their colour also assimilating to it: they therefore run to some distance, or squat down to conceal themselves, rising if the danger appears too proximate; then the male stretches up his head to reconnoitre, and with a loud call takes wing, followed by the female and the young.

The tender leaves and shoots of the heath and ling are the main articles of food of the Grouse, as also those of cotton grass and various grasses, the willows, the trailing arbutus, the bedstraw, the whortleberry, the crowberry, the bilberry, and the berries of the latter-named of these, but they also feed voraciously on corn, if any is grown within their reach, oats especially, and swallow small particles of stone in aid of digestion. The pieces of the heath which they take are about half an inch long each, and these they select as they walk about among the heather. When not feeding they rest within its shelter, or bask in the sun in some open place, under the cover of some tuft or bush.

The bold challenge of the Moor-cock, imaginable into a 'go, go, go-back, go-back,' a call of defiance, or of alarm to their mate or young, or both, in the spring or the autumn, as the case may be, is heard both early in the morning, soon after dawn, and late in the evening, as also at times throughout the day: the ordinary note is a deep and quickly-repeated 'coc, coc.'

The Moor-cock pairs early in the spring, commonly in January, but sometimes even earlier. A brood of young Grouse, able to fly a little, were discovered on the 5th. of

March, 1794, near Pendle Hill, in Yorkshire, by the gamekeeper of Mr. Lister, afterwards Lord Ribblesdale; and a nest with fifteen eggs was found on the 25th. of March, 1835, on Shap Fell, Westmoreland. The female usually begins to lay in March or April; she sits very close, and Mr. Salmon says that one allowed him to take her off her eggs.

The nest is made of twigs of heather and grass, with occasionally a few of the bird's own feathers, and is placed among heath in some slight hollow.

The eggs are usually six or seven, but sometimes from eight to twelve, or even more, in number, of different shades of ground colour—reddish white, brownish yellow, yellowish grey, or yellowish white, thickly clouded, blotted, and dotted with blackish and brown: they are nearly of a regular oval form.

While the young are hatching, the hen utters an occasional chuckle. The Heath Poults leave the nest shortly after they are hatched, and are soon able to fly; they keep together till the end of autumn, unless disturbed by shooters: they are attended by both the parents. At the beginning of the season they lie close, but gradually become wild as they are disturbed.

Male; weight, about nineteen or twenty ounces, and from that to twenty-three, or even to twenty-four and three quarters, or upwards; the Grouse of Yorkshire are said to be the smallest, but Daniel, in his 'Rural Sports,' mentions one killed near Richmond, in Yorkshire, which weighed twenty-five ounces, and Pennant another which weighed twenty-nine; one killed in Wales weighed thirty ounces, and another twenty-six ounces; another near Todmorden, in Lancashire, one pound fifteen ounces. Length, from one foot three inches and a quarter, to a little over one foot four and a half; bill, brownish black, half hidden in feathers—there are a few small white feathers at the base, ending in a thread of white on the side of the head; iris, chesnut brown; the membrane over the eyebrows red, the feathers of the eyelids white. Head, deep chesnut brown; the crown irregularly barred in summer with brownish black, as is the neck on the back and nape; chin, throat, and breast, reddish chesnut brown, the latter blackish brown on its middle part, the chesnut bars being narrower than the black ones, and some of the feathers are white at their tips; the ground colour paler, and more barred in summer. Back, reddish brown, minutely barred with brownish black, most of the feathers having also a patch of black.

The wings, short, broad, and rounded, have the third and fourth feathers nearly equal and the longest, the fifth longer than the second, which is longer than the sixth, the first about the same length as the seventh, but shorter than the sixth; they expand from two feet one inch and a half, to two feet three. Greater and lesser wing coverts, reddish chesnut brown, barred with black lines; the primaries, ten, dusky brown; the secondaries, fifteen, mostly dusky brown, the outer margins minutely mottled with reddish brown, and the inner five reddish brown minutely barred with brownish black, and with patches of black; tertiaries, also brown, edged on the outside and freckled with lighter brown; greater and lesser under wing coverts, white, but in some individuals spotted and barred with brown. The tail, short, straight, and slightly rounded, of sixteen feathers; under tail coverts, chesnut, with a bar of black, and the end and the tips white. Legs, feathered, light grey, sometimes mottled with brown; toes, feathered also, light grey; the first toe is extremely short, the third the longest, the fourth a little longer than the second; they are roughened underneath, and the front ones webbed at the base, and with three plates at the end. 'The number of scutellæ that may be clearly traced is, on the several toes, three, five, nine, and six.' The claws are rather long, arched, flattened, and the tips blunt; they are blackish brown at the base, and greyish yellow at the end.

The female is a good deal smaller and less bulky, as also paler in colour. Weight, above sixteen ounces; length, one foot three inches and a quarter; bill, brownish black, the white feathers at the base of the bill are duller; iris, hazel; the membrane over the eye is less, and not so bright, and the white feathers on the eyelids are also duller. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, yellowish chesnut brown, tinged with red with a few black spots, all paler in summer; chin, throat, and breast, pale brownish red barred with brownish black, and tipped with yellowish, paler in summer; on the sides barred with black and yellowish; back, yellowish chesnut brown tinged with red, paler in summer, the tips of most of the feathers yellowish.

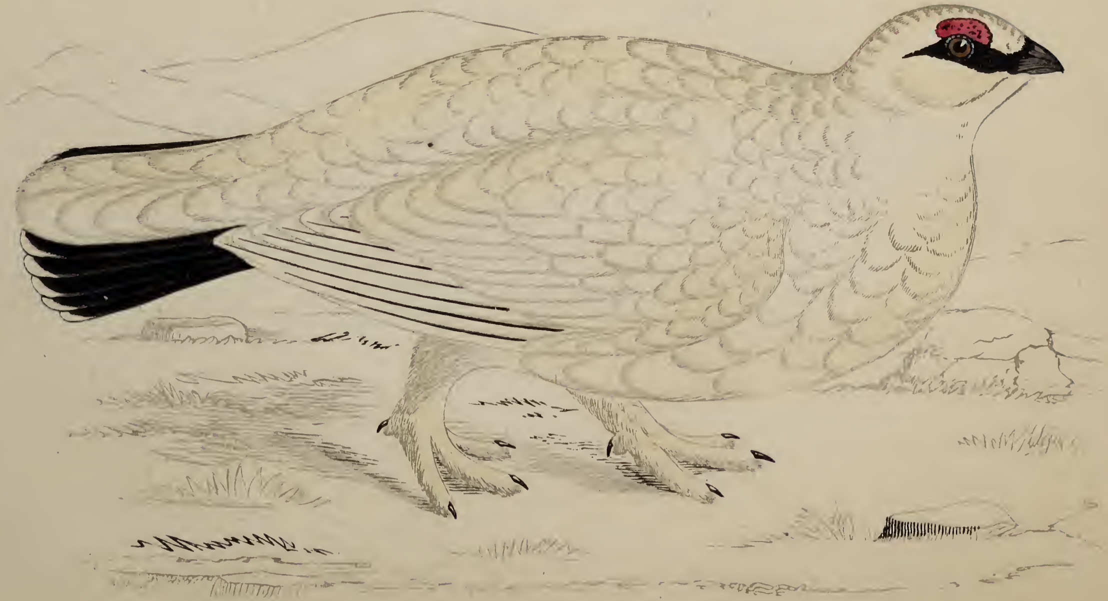
The wings expand to the width of two feet one inch and a quarter; greater and lesser wing coverts, barred with black and tipped with yellowish; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, paler brown more tinged with grey; greater and lesser under wing coverts, mostly white, but some of them brown, and others barred. The tail has the four middle feathers barred with black, and tipped with yellowish, the rest barred with reddish, except towards the tips, which are yellowish grey; upper tail coverts, barred with black, and tipped with yellowish.

The young are at first covered with pale yellowish grey down; the head, chesnut, margined with darker brown, the lower parts mottled with pale brown, and the upper with deep brown. After a month's growth the bill is brownish black, the tip of the upper one whitish; iris, hazel. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, brownish black, each feather edged and barred with yellowish red; the neck on the sides and in front, greyish yellow. Throat, greyish yellow; breast, yellowish grey, barred with brownish black; back, brownish black, each feather edged and barred with yellowish red. The primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries have the outer webs greyish brown, irregularly edged and barred with pale reddish yellow. Legs, yellowish grey; claws, pale brown.

When fully fledged they resemble the adult female. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, pale yellowish red, barred with blackish brown; chin, throat, and breast, paler. Back, pale yellowish red, mottled and barred with brownish black and pale yellow, most of the feathers having a small whitish spot at the tip. Primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, greyish brown barred with greyish yellow. Tail, greyish brown barred with greyish yellow.

After the moult, which takes place in the middle of winter, the male has the head and neck on the back still much barred and blotted, the breast chiefly brownish black tinged with grey; the legs and toes grey. The female has most of the feathers tipped with whitish, and is altogether of a paler and more yellow colour than the male, and the tail more or less barred. In summer, also, still paler than in winter.

Red Grouse vary considerably in colour, those in Wales and the western side of the island being lighter coloured, and those on the eastern side darker; the former also are said to be the largest: scarcely two can be found exactly alike. Some have the breast nearly black, some with a good deal of white; some have the back with much black—different localities furnish birds of different 'shades of character.' In one, a cream-coloured or light yellowish brown variety, the usual markings were preserved; the quills and greater wing coverts were of a bluish grey cast, as was the lower part of the breast: it was a young bird. Individuals are met with more or less variegated with white; others pale greyish yellow, faintly mottled with dusky: one mottled with brown and white was shot by Lord Stanley. Some birds are very dark, some have the quill feathers entirely or partly white. Sir William Jardine mentions one in which the quills were dull white, the ground colour yellowish white, the dark markings on it pale reddish brown.



PTARMIGAN.

PTARMIGAN.

Lagopus vulgaris,	FLEMING.
" *mutus,*	SELBY. GOULD.
Tetrao lagopus,	PENNANT. MONTAGU.

Lagopus. *Lagos*—A hare *Pous*—A foot. *Vulgaris*—Common.

THIS beautiful bird, the Ptarmigan of the Gaelic, whose snowy whiteness puts one in mind of the far-famed Campanero, the Bell-bird of the Brazils, belongs to Northern Europe, Asia, and America, even within the Polar circle, as the accounts of the Arctic expeditions so often testify, extending also in its range to more southerly districts—Germany, Savoy, Switzerland, and even to Spain and Italy, from Norway, Lapland, Sweden, and Russia, and the Arctic regions.

It is said also to have been an inhabitant formerly of Wales and the north of England, but it has followed the fortunes of the Gael to the Highlands of Sutherlandshire and other counties, and there finds a comparative security, which across the 'Border' it could no longer count upon. In Westmoreland and Cumberland, in the neighbourhood of Keswick, it was formerly to be found.

In the Hebrides also it occurs, in the Island of Harris, and, I believe, in South Uist, Lewis, Skye, Mull, and Jura. In Orkney it existed till a few years ago in Hoy, but wholesale slaughter effected their extermination. Mr. Dunn met with it in Shetland.

True 'Children of the mist,' and free as the pure air they breathe, the Ptarmigans frequent the upper parts and summits of the highest mountains, where utter desolation reigns around, and nature is seen in the most wild and savage beauty. These scenes they never leave—the mountaineer's love for his native mountain is stronger than any other 'Love of one's country.' In extremely severe and stormy weather they come a little lower down, or take advantage of the shelter of the clefts that are met with in some lonely glen, but never cease to be birds of the snow. There the scanty vegetation, diminished from even the stunted growth of the lower parts, and barely nourished by the sterile soil that has gathered among the crumbling masses of fallen rocks, seem shrunk into itself, shunning the cold of the upper regions, and the withered and blighted remains of the pine forest or the birch wood tell a like tale of the curdling blasts that have frozen out their life in years that are gone.

As you wander on, you suddenly come upon some small lake, of unfathomable depth, whose blue waters reflect the dark forms of the surrounding craggy rocks and giddy precipices which tower about the lonesome valley far below. Peak upon peak and range upon range arise in the far distance, and here and there a silver stream trickles down their hoary sides, threading its devious way in its time-worn gully among the wrecks of the mountain top that have fallen or been hurled from their primeval place. It is indeed a 'solemn silence' that prevails, and mysterious, strange, and melancholy, but yet thrilling with pleasure is the feeling that swells the heart. Above, the clouds of heaven roll along, going you know not whither, nor can your fancy guide you, their edges gilded with crimson and purple by the rays of the setting sun, who yet shines below and through them on the hills in a thousand different shades and lights 'passing away.' Again, on the side of the brow hangs a heavy mass of vapour, faintly painted too on its western border with the red of the alpine rose; this next is spread into wreaths of grey mist, which seem to cling to the humid earth; and in the far distance rises up a dark and lurid mass of cloud, the murky form of which seems pregnant with the lightning, whose flash you seem instinctively aware of, the foreboding of nature warning you to retreat to shelter. Now the sun sets in glory and gorgeous splendour behind the farthest peak, and now the black cloud lowers nearer and nearer, silently moving up the vault; now the whispers of the rising gale come on and on to the ear, and darkness unexpectedly begins to fall and gather on all around, 'Away, away to the mountain's brow,' if you doubt the 'Omnipresence of the Deity;' there 'on such a night' you must, like Moses, veil your face, and be 'afraid to look upon God.' There is that in such a scene to awe the heart, and he is not worthy the name of man who does not fear before the presence of the Almighty.

In winter the Ptarmigan descends somewhat lower, but seldom ventures into the plain. He seems to revel in the falling snow, burrows a chilly bed in it, wherein he lies or plumes himself, runs gaily over its crystal surface, or, perched on the tallest rock, turns his stainless breast towards the drift, and challenges its whiteness with his own. The driving sleet he willingly welcomes, heedless of the cold; it would seem as if his winter dress, put on together with the snowy mantle that covers the face of the earth around him, gave him a similar protection from the frost; and when the summer comes again, he too changes his garb, and once more is in uniform with the grey rocks, the companions whom he loves, and never leaves.

If a person comes in sight, they remain motionless, and often lie very close till they are approached within a few yards; otherwise some sentinel, perched on the top of a stone, gives the alarm and flies away, followed by the rest of the flock, who rise up all around. They gather into large flocks even by the end of July, and separate again and pair early in the spring; then the pairs, and in due time their broods, almost the sole occupants of the mountain tops, blend the grey colours of their plumage with those of the moss-covered rocks, to which nature has well and wisely adapted them. At this season they are tame, and only run away before an intruder, uttering their low wild cry. 'In this way they will often reach the opposite edge of the rock, and will, as it were, drop off; but the expectation of finding them on some lower ledge will be disappointed, for they have, perhaps, by that time sought for and reached the opposite side of the mountain, by a low wheeling flight, as noiseless as the solitudes by which they are surrounded.' Like so many other birds, these too flutter off in well-simulated disablement to draw away attention from their young. These latter, as soon as able to fly, seem instinctively aware of the protection afforded to them by the resemblance of their plumage to the grey lichen-covered rocks and stones, and will lie motionless, like stones, in another sense also of the word, almost close to your feet. In very bright weather they avoid the glare of the sun on the snow, and seek the shady side of the mountain.

Ptarmigans are good eating, and therefore in request for the table. They acquire a somewhat bitter taste. 'In the year 1839, one dealer alone shipped six thousand for London, two thousand for Hull, and two thousand for Liverpool;

and early in March, 1840, a salesman in Leadenhall market received fifteen thousand Ptarmigan that had been consigned to him. Sir A. De Capell Brooke calculated that sixty thousand had been killed during one winter in Lapland: and Mr. Lloyd says that a dealer in Norway will dispose of fifty thousand in a season.' It is from these countries that such prodigious numbers come, and they are all taken in horse-hair nooses. The Ptarmigan is a bird easily kept in confinement, and has been known to breed in the tame state.

Their flight is low, straight, and moderately rapid, and causes a whirring noise; they do not ordinarily fly far, and when alighting run on a little way. In walking about, the back is rounded up and the tail drooped, but if observant of supposed danger, the attitude becomes attentive. They can run very fast if necessary, and do so if alarmed, dipping into the air over some eminence, and so disappearing. At night they roost either under a stone or tuft, or else in the snow, scooping out a hollow in which they almost completely bury themselves, and indeed sometimes it proves their grave, in which they are snowed up, though they can remain, it is said, for a week, till a thaw or some increased exertion on their own part releases them.

They feed on the buds, berries, leaves, blossoms, and seeds of various plants and shrubs—the heath, the cranberry, the cloudberry, the bilberry, the crowberry, the dwarf birch, and others, and walk about among them to select such as are most to their liking, and also swallow small fragments of stone and sand to aid the triturition of their food. Snow seems to supply their drink, for they go in search of it in the summer months. The young are at first fed with insects.

Their call or note is a wild, harsh, hoarse, grating croak, which harmonizes well with the desolate scenes which the presence of the bird almost alone enlivens. It is sometimes low, and sometimes more loud is heard at a great distance in the thin air of the exalted regions which furnish these Grouse with a dwelling-place. It is occasionally prolonged for some length of time, and is heard occasionally when the bird is flying, as well as when he is settled.

The Ptarmigan pairs early in the spring, and the eggs are begun to be laid in June, and to be sat upon by the beginning of July, incubation lasting three weeks. The hen alone brings up the brood, and has been known to do so even when the male had been taken, and so also if one of the young had been picked up, to go close to the person taking it, as if to demand it back again; she gathers them under her wings in cold and stormy weather.

The nest, if any be formed, for sometimes the bare earth is laid upon, is composed of a small portion of heather or grass, placed in some slight hollow under a rock, stone, or plant, and is very difficult to be detected, 'for,' says Sir William Jardine, 'the female, on perceiving a person approach, generally leaves it, and is only discovered by her motion over the rocks, or her low clucking cry.' The male on the first sign of danger has flown off, and she thus follows him, the young dispersing in all directions, hiding themselves and laying still under any stones, tufts, or bushes. Meyer says, 'It is reported that the male Ptarmigan behaves very remarkably during the time when the female sits on her eggs, and that under these circumstances he will sit immoveable in one spot for hours together, even on the approach of danger; and when stationed thus near the nest he has been known to remain there, looking around on the landscape quite unmoved. As soon as the young are hatched, both parents become alert and busy, and towards autumn more careful, and finally very shy in the winter. If the weather is fine and sunny in winter, they are all again slow to move.' But the male, it would appear, leaves the education of the young to the hen bird, rejoining them all again later in the season, and then several families pack together.

The eggs, from seven or eight to twelve in number, of a regular oval form, are of a white, yellowish white, greenish white, or reddish colour, blotted and spotted with brown and brownish black.

The male in winter is pure white, except the space between the bill and the eye, the feathers of which, and a few behind it, are black, the shafts of the quills, and the outer feathers of the tail, which are also deep black. Length, one foot one inch and a half to three inches and a half; bill, blackish brown; iris, yellowish brown, and the membrane over it vermilion red. In spring the forehead, head on the crown and sides, neck on the back, and nape, are marked with bands of brownish black and reddish yellow alternately, the former the broader, and all slightly tipped with white, the bands narrower in autumn, and turning to grey, followed by the white of winter. Throat, deep brownish black; breast, excepting its fore part and sides, which are also deep brownish black, with a few interrupted, narrow, irregular bars of reddish yellow, and a white spot on the tip, below, chiefly white in summer, all white in winter; back, irregularly barred in summer with brownish black and reddish yellow or bluish grey marks, narrower in autumn, and changing to grey, then to white; the tips of the feathers white.

The wings extend from the width of two feet one inch to two feet two; the first quill is an inch and a half shorter than the second, the second rather longer than the fifth, the third and fourth nearly equal, and the longest; greater and lesser wing coverts, white, some of them in summer minutely waved with yellow or greyish white and brownish black, the bars narrower in autumn, and fading into grey before the white; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, white, the shafts black, some of the first-named minutely waved with yellow or greyish white and brownish black, the bars narrowing in autumn. The tail, of eighteen feathers, in summer has the two middle feathers barred minutely with yellow or greyish yellow and brownish black, more narrowly in autumn, the rest brownish black, the two middle ones white towards winter; the two middle tail feathers are very long; under tail coverts, white. The legs, white, feathered, as are the toes on their upper parts and sides, but the soles bare; the first toe is very short and elevated, the third much longer than the second, which is of about the same length as the fourth; the front toes are webbed at the base, and have three terminal scales; the hind toe has two series of scales: their shape well fits them for scratching in the snow. The claws are rather long, and arched, the hind one the most so, but smaller, brownish black, pale towards the end.

The female, in the white plumage of winter, is sometimes most delicately tinged with faint rose-colour. Length, one foot two inches and a half to one foot two and three quarters; bill, black; the membrane over the eye pale red, and there are no black feathers before and behind it. The wings are in extent from one foot eleven inches to two feet or two feet one; primaries, with their shafts brown. The tail, black towards the end for two thirds of its length, but the tip white; the two middle feathers white, or in some minutely waved and dotted with grey and reddish brown, and in summer barred with yellow and black. The winter plumage continues white until the spring, when the white feathers become barred with yellow and black, and changed into blackish, barred with greyish white on the back.

The young are at first covered with a light yellowish grey down; the head on the crown with a light chesnut mark, edged with a darker shade; the back patched with brown. The plumage soon changes, the upper parts becoming spotted and barred with pale grey and brown, and the wings and the under parts white. They acquire the white plumage the first winter, but the spots and bars larger than in the second.

The Ptarmigan of this country rarely become so beautifully and perfectly white as those of more northern countries.

These birds vary greatly in their summer plumage, some being most elegantly banded or mottled, and others more or less dotted and even patched and spotted with black; in old birds the dark markings dwindle to mere slender waved lines, or even a series of dots.

It would appear from Macgillivray's measurements that these birds differ occasionally in the proportionate length of their several parts.

The plate is taken from a design by the Rev. R. P. Alington.

PARTRIDGE.

COMMON PARTRIDGE.

Perdix cinerea,	LATHAM. JENYNS.
Tetrao perdix,	LINNÆUS.

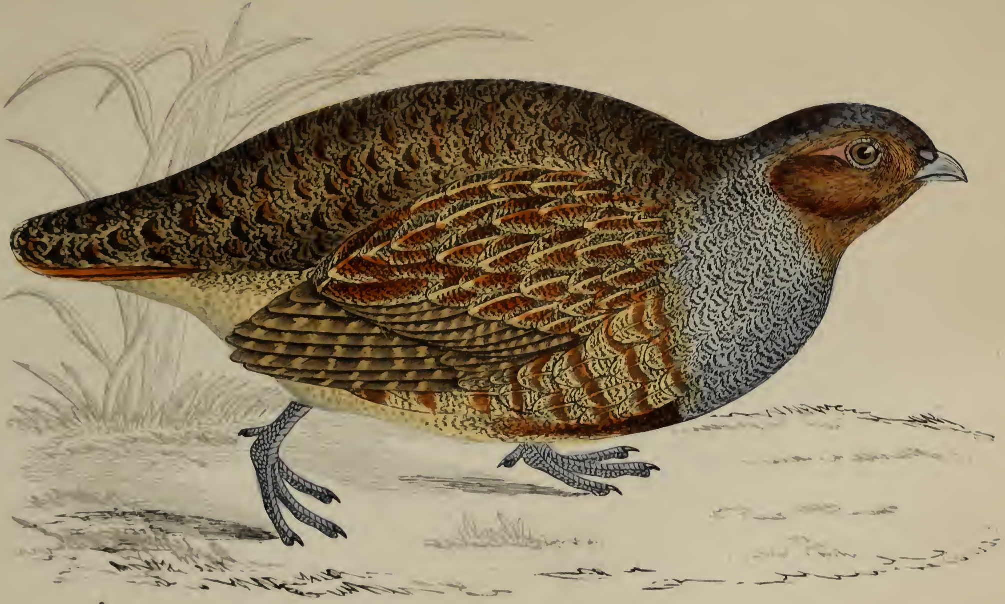
Perdix—A Partridge. *Cinerea*—Ash-coloured.

AN acquired taste is a proverbial expression, and, as such, redolent of truth. There is too, if I may so say, such a thing as an acquired scent, and that of a turnip field, as a rendezvous of the Partridge, is a good instance of it. It is not, 'a priori,' particularly agreeable, and yet I think that I shall not be adjudged to be far wrong by some, at all events, of my readers, in pronouncing it to be one of a most exhilarating and pleasant nature in the month of October.

Partridges are found in most temperate climes, and are probably nowhere more numerous than in England. They belong to Europe, and also it is said to Asia and Africa: in the former they occur from the south of Siberia, through Russia, to the shores of the Mediterranean; in Norway they are rare, and only occur in the extreme south, which is somewhat remarkable. In Africa, in Barbary and Egypt.

They are plentiful throughout England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and are sometimes found in very wild situations, where they would not naturally be looked for.

The Rev. G. Low mentions in the 'Fauna Orcadensis,' that in his time Partridges were introduced into Waas, one of the Orkney Islands, but unsuccessfully. More lately the experiment has been again tried by the Earl of Orkney, who introduced them into Ronsay, in 1840. Since then Mr. Balfour, of Trenaby, has made a similar trial in Shapinsay; and in both these islands the result has been successful.



PARTRIDGE.

In some countries they are stationary, but in others are said to be migratory.

They frequent the cultivated districts, but coveys are not unfrequently met with on the edges of moors in the neighbourhood of the former localities. They often wander to wastes and commons, where gorse, broom, and other wild shrubs and plants flourish, and occasionally enter woods.

Partridges are fond of dusting themselves, and shuffle their feathers, in roads or dry places, like so many other birds. In the mornings they repair to the stubble, grass fields, and hedge sides, which they leave for the shelter of clover, turnip, or potato fields during the midday, returning again towards evening to their former feeding-grounds. At night they generally lodge in the middle of a field, to be the more secure, sometimes keeping to the same place for a fortnight together; but this exposes them to the nets of the fowler, and they require to be protected by bushes being stuck in the ground at intervals. They lie in a cluster with their heads outward. Where well preserved, they become very tame, and exhibit much indifference to the presence of man. It is curious to see how totally they already seem to disregard the passing of a railway train, sometimes alighting close to one, or remaining in a field adjoining quite near. Some have been killed by flying against a train in motion, and others, as indeed various other birds, by dashing in their flight against the telegraph wires, the 'electric shock' proving fatal to them.

Like so many other birds, they also, and even in an especial degree, use earnest devices to entice away supposed enemies from their nest. One has been known to feign to be dead, and scarcely could be frightened to get up, but then it flew away quite well; another to peck at the feet of a person who approached her young. 'The art of the Partridge is familiar to the sportsman, and excites admiration in all the lovers of nature. At the signal for silence and retreat the infant young may be seen to run to the nearest cover, while the parent seems seized with a sudden lameness and inability to fly; or the male will practice this device, fluttering off to a distance in an apparently disabled manner, and then suddenly dropping, as if dead, will return by some circuitous route to the place he had left, the hen meanwhile having collected the young under her wings. Or else she flutters along the ground with drooping wings in an opposite direction to that which the brood has taken, and not until she has successfully misled the observer, does she resume her power and wing away to a greater distance.' The parent birds exhibit great affection for their young in leading them out and calling them together to feed. Hen birds have been found dead with their broods under their wings, perishing themselves from the effects of cold and hunger, sooner than leave them to exposure in severe weather. The male is very pugnacious in spring, driving off all intruders, and endeavouring to guard his mate. Mr. Selby tells of a pair which attacked a Crow which threatened their young, and held him till taken from them by a person who came up; and Markwick says that he saw a pair fly up at and buffet a Kite which had been hovering over their brood. They are believed to pair for life. The male birds have combats together in the spring, and use their claws as offensive weapons.

A hen Partridge has been known, on perceiving that her nest was discovered, to cover the eggs over with leaves so completely, that it (the nest,) could not again have been casually noticed; and each morning as she laid a fresh egg, she covered all over again. Montagu mentions one which, being taken with her eggs, continued to sit on them, and brought out the young. Mr. Jesse relates a curious anecdote of a Partridge which, being disturbed by a plough driven close to her nest, removed the eggs, nineteen in number, assisted perhaps by her mate, to a distance of forty yards under a hedge, before the return of the plough, an interval of twenty minutes: such instances have more than once occurred. Of another he says, 'A farmer discovered a Partridge sitting on its eggs in a grass field. The bird allowed him to pass his hand down its back without moving or shewing any fear; but if he offered to touch the eggs, the poor bird immediately pecked his hand.' One has been known to fly at and attack a person who picked up one of her young running in a road, on hearing its cry.

Of another it is related in the 'Zoologist,' pages 1601-2, by Arthur Hussey, Esq., 'It soon shewed it liked to be always with me, and was perfectly happy in my lap; or when I have been painting, it would sit on my left arm dressing itself or sleeping in entire security. I used to take it into my mother's room, and if it could lie on her gown at her feet, it was contented, but was always on the watch for my coming back, and on seeing me would jump up and run to meet me. It was now so tame and pleased with being fondled as to excite much astonishment. My mother soon became very fond of it, and by degrees it was more with her than with me. Its cage was never inhabited; it would never sleep in confinement; therefore was awake and quite alive all the evening, being either in the lap or on the sofa. When he had changed his feathers and attained his full plumage, he refused to be handled, but his habits were as sociable as before. His knowledge of every one was most extraordinary: his likings and dislikings were very strong; and he was so curious and observant, that no piece of furniture could be moved without his finding it out, and if the carpet was not smooth, he would set to work instantly to render it so by picking and scratching.

He was very fond of gay colours, and no new cap or gown could be put on without its catching his attention. He never offered to go up or down stairs, and very rarely used his wings. On being gently chastised when he did fly, he would run and hide himself like a child, as if he knew he had done wrong. A box of earth was given him to rub in, which he thoroughly enjoyed. His feathers were always glossy and in the most perfect order, which I attribute to his always having plenty of green food, such as grass and clover cut small. In the winter he liked wheat, but rarely touched it in the summer; was very fond of sugar and cake; drank very little water; and liked his food dry. He never forgot any one he had made acquaintance with, and the return of any of the family after many months absence, caused him so much joy and excitement that I have been compelled to shut him up. He would distinguish their voices even before they got out of the carriage. His partiality for my mother was very great, and if she was asleep, nothing would tempt him to quit her, but he never liked her to be in the drawing-room. In the evening he always came into the drawing-room, and remained till we retired. He slept at my bed-side, and never disturbed me, nor got up himself, till I was called, and then he had a particular call if he fancied I was gone to sleep again. Once, from being frightened, he flew out of the window, and being recovered after much trouble, (it was in a town,) he never again offered to get out. After this we had nets at the window, and the net being one day left down in my room, by running up to my mother and then into my room he attracted her notice, and she followed him, he standing before the window, and when the net was replaced shewing himself satisfied. Unlike most pets, he died a natural death on the 1st. of January, 1843.'

Bishop Stanley writes, 'We are not indeed without instances of wild Turkeys at this day in our own country, and a curious anecdote has reached us of a friendship taking place between a flock of these birds and a Partridge. It occurred at Tyninghame, in Scotland, where there is a breed of Turkeys which never enter into the poultry-house or yard, but roost in the trees, and live chiefly on beech-mast and anything else they can pick up, though they are tame enough to come about the house to be fed in the time of frost and snow. About eight or ten years ago, a cock Partridge, full grown, suddenly joined himself to a flock of these Turkeys, and remained with them constantly during the whole summer, autumn, and winter: at night he slept under the trees in which they roosted; in the day he fed with them, and was not the least frightened or disturbed by people walking among them. He took great liberties with the old Turkey cock; when he saw him going to pick up a worm or any seed, he used to run under him between his legs and snatch it out of his mouth, the Turkey cock never resenting the indignity. Early in the spring he left them, as it was supposed to find himself a mate for the pairing-season, but in the beginning of autumn he rejoined his old friends, and continued with them as formerly until the next pairing-time, when he again disappeared, but returned no more, having probably been killed.'

He adds—'In a gentleman's family one was reared which became so familiar, that it would attend the parlour at breakfast and other times, and would afterwards stretch itself before the fire, seeming to enjoy the warmth, as if it were its natural bask on a sunny bank. The dogs of the house never molested it, but unfortunately it one day fell under the paws of a strange cat, and was killed.' The hen Partridge, which alone sits, displays great pertinacity in keeping on her nest, and offers a bold resistance to any feathered plunderers; but if quietly approached, will suffer herself sometimes to be touched, and even to be removed with the eggs, which she will continue to sit upon and will hatch; but then, with her brood, she will naturally endeavour to return to the fields. The young, if approached, will sometimes lie close, 'with listening ears and watchful eyes,' but if the intruder comes too near, will start off with a faint cry.

In winter they sometimes pack together in large companies of as many as thirty or forty, especially in wild and open parts of the country. Single survivors of other coveys are taken into the community. Partridges are easily tamed to a certain extent, so as even to take food from the hands of strangers, and have been known to lay in confinement. Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson, Bart., had seven or eight young ones reared in his aviary at Charlton, in the summer of 1842. Part of a brood of young ones brought up under a hen, after having been set at liberty a mile off, have been known to return and be fed by the person who before had had the care of them during the winter months. An anecdote is related in the 'Zoologist,' pages 1601-2, by Arthur Hussey, Esq., of Rottingdean, of one which, having been brought up from about a day old, became most thoroughly tame. Another evinced great personal attachment to a lady, and would sit for hours on the back of her chair, and roost near the head of her bed at night, never failing to shew every symptom of distress and concern during her occasional absences. If alarmed, the Partridge, proverbial for timidity, cowers down, or runs off with great rapidity, as it may be likewise seen to do in pursuit of its companions; or, if closely pressed, takes wing.

In their flight, which is strong and rather quick, they gradually rise to a little height, and then fly off in a direct course, with a loud 'whirr'—the effect of the quick pulsation of the wings. At the end of a long flight, after being alarmed, they finish in a sailing manner, and alight sidelong. In feeding, the back is arched up, and if alarmed the head is raised erect, and thus it walks about, till, if need be, it runs along, and then takes wing. If they lie close it is very difficult to see them.

They feed in the mornings and evenings, and live on grain, beans, and seeds, worms, caterpillars, beetles, and other insects, as also in times of scarcity on turnip tops and roots, young clover, or probably any tender leaves: the young are at first fed with insects—ants and their eggs especially, if there are any to be met with. The Partridge must do far more good than harm, devouring immense numbers of noxious insects, wireworms and others, as well as the seeds of injurious plants; at the same time some injury is caused by their scratching and picking up grains of newly-sown wheat, and eating the young green shoots that have come up. They suffer much in times of deep snow from want of food. In the summer they are mostly concealed by the standing corn, and in the autumn in any other cover, and along hedges and ditches, and in osier beds, where there are any, and other situations. Some are said to subsist on heath and whortleberries in places where these grow, and to acquire the flavour of Grouse: they drink but little.

The call of the Partridge, 'chicurr, chicurrr,' is heard early in the spring, and even in the winter months, at the close of day, a summons together after separation; I have heard it on the 7th. of this present December, 1853, after a hard white frost still unthawed in the shade. It is especially frequent in the still summer evenings, when the silence is pleasingly broken in upon by it, or the 'droning flight' of the beetle, or some other country sound, equally speaking to the listening ear of happy rural life. They have a note of caution and warning, on hearing which the young steal away to the nearest place of security, and there remain concealed till a cluck from the dam announces that the danger has disappeared.

These birds begin to pair very early, even so soon, as has been observed, as the 3rd. of February in Yorkshire, and by the 1st. elsewhere; usually between that date and the 14th., and are then found in ploughed and clover fields. At those times there are often fierce combats between the male birds. Some few never pair at all, perhaps for want of mates. The young of more than one nest sometimes join together in coveys. It is said that they remain as long as three weeks in the neighbourhood where they think of making their nest, apprehensive of choosing a dangerous site, and if the one first selected appears to be such, they fix themselves somewhere else.

The nest is only a few straws placed in a mere hollow scratched in the earth, under the shelter perhaps of some tuft, generally in open grass and other fields, among peas, corn, weeds, or herbage, at the foot of a tree or bush, or by a post, but at times in a small plantation, among shrubs, under a hedgerow, even by the road-side, and on the moors in the vicinity of cultivated land; sometimes in holes of decayed trees, as much as three or four feet from the ground, and even on the top of hay-stacks; I have been told of a nest placed in this situation, the coveys hatched, and safely reared. A brace of Partridges have been known, their own nest having been destroyed, to take up with the nest and eggs of a pair of Pheasants, the hen of which had been killed, on the estate of Colonel Burgoyne, in Essex. The hen bird alone sits, the male keeping watch, and when the young are hatched he joins the covey, and protects and feeds them with the dam.

The eggs, which are of a pale greenish brown colour, are laid towards the end of May or the beginning of June, and are usually ten or twelve in number, but sometimes as many as fifteen, eighteen, or even twenty. The 'Norfolk News' mentions a nest hatched at Ditchingham between the 13th. and 18th. of April, 1851. Twenty-two eggs are recorded to have been found in one nest, and thirty-one in another, two hen birds having occupied the same one, and in the former instance the cock bird gathered half of the united family under his wings, the pair sitting side by side, but looking different ways. The young leave the nest almost as soon as they are hatched. Incubation lasts about twenty-one days, beginning about the 20th. of June.

'It is a curious fact,' says Mr. Jesse, 'that when young Partridges are hatched and have left the nest, the two portions of each shell will be found placed the one within the other. I believe that this is invariably the case. This is doubtless done by the chicks themselves in their last successful effort to escape from prison.' Only one brood is reared in the year, unless indeed the first nest be destroyed, and so a third, if the second happen to be, but in these cases the eggs are fewer, and the young are said to be less strong.

The Partridge varies much in weight according to the quality of the country it inhabits. Male; weight about fifteen ounces; length, one foot and half an inch; bill, light greyish blue, strong and short, the upper mandible a good deal curved, overhanging and extending beyond the lower one; iris, hazel; over and behind it is a bare space of bright red, and a band of light yellowish chesnut red, edged with grey. Forehead and head on the sides, light yellowish chesnut, edged with grey; crown, greyish brown, with slender yellow shaft lines; neck on the back and sides, and the nape, grey, minutely waved with blackish brown; chin and throat, light yellowish chesnut, edged with bluish grey; breast, bluish grey, minutely freckled and waved with blackish brown, and on its lower part is a horse-shoe-shaped mark of brownish red, on a white ground; the shaft streaks white; on the sides it is barred with chesnut; back, minutely banded with dots of brownish black, lines of brownish yellow and grey, with bars of brownish red, the latter colour widening on the lower part, the shafts yellowish.

The wings, expanding to the width of one foot eight inches, are short and much rounded, and have the fourth feather the longest, the third nearly as long, the fifth also about the same, the first nearly equal to the sixth and seventh; greater wing coverts, dark greyish brown, widely banded with greyish yellow; primaries, dark greyish brown, widely banded with greyish yellow; secondaries, fifteen, the first very short. The tail, of sixteen brownish red feathers, is very short, and much hidden by the coverts; the tips of all the feathers are reddish white, the two middle ones and the edges of the next pair marked with dots of brownish black, lines of brownish yellow and grey, with bars of brownish red; upper tail coverts, some of which are long, freckled with two shades of brown, and barred with chesnut; under tail coverts, pale yellowish grey or whitish. Legs, short, and rather strong, above the knee greyish white; toes, pale greyish blue, tinged with yellow; claws, dusky brown, short, strong, and blunted with use.

Female; length, one foot; the part about the bill paler; the crown marked with small oblong yellowish white streaks; the neck on its lower part is more mixed with brown; the patch on the breast is not so large, though sometimes nearly so, and in some is only composed of a few spots on a greyish white space; on its lower part it is white, and the chesnut marks on the sides are broader; the back has the band longer, and the yellowish white streaks broader; the wings are one foot seven inches in expanse.

In the young at first the bill is greyish brown, the tip of the upper mandible yellowish; there is no red mark behind the eye. Crown, chesnut brown, patched with brownish black; forehead, neck, and nape, greyish yellow, marked with black; chin and throat, pale yellowish chesnut; the breast, after the first moult, has the horse-shoe small, and in the females generally wanting; back, greyish yellow, marked with black spots, afterwards greyish brown, barred with brownish black; on its lower part clouded with brown. Wings brown, with black spots, afterwards patched with brownish red; the tail, after the first moult, has the four middle feathers barred; legs and toes, yellowish grey brown.

The Partridge is very subject to variety. In the 'Cambrian' newspaper it is stated that two brace were shot near Brecon; 'there breasts were snowy white, and round their heads was a ring of the same colour.' One was shot near York in September, 1851, which had the upper mandible very much elongated and curved upwards and backwards, something like that of the Avocet. It is difficult to understand how the bird could have well fed itself, nevertheless it was in good condition. White varieties are not very unfrequently met with, and cream-coloured ones; others with the tints all faded, and others more or less pied with white. Sir William Jardine describes one with the usual markings, but of a deeper general hue, and without the horse-shoe; the head, neck, and patch on the breast brown, and the space about the bill black. A very curious circumstance is recorded in 'The Naturalist,' volume iii., page 37, by John Dixon, Esq., of eight young birds being killed, all with a malformation of the bill, it being bent upwards.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.

GUERNSEY PARTRIDGE. FRENCH PARTRIDGE.

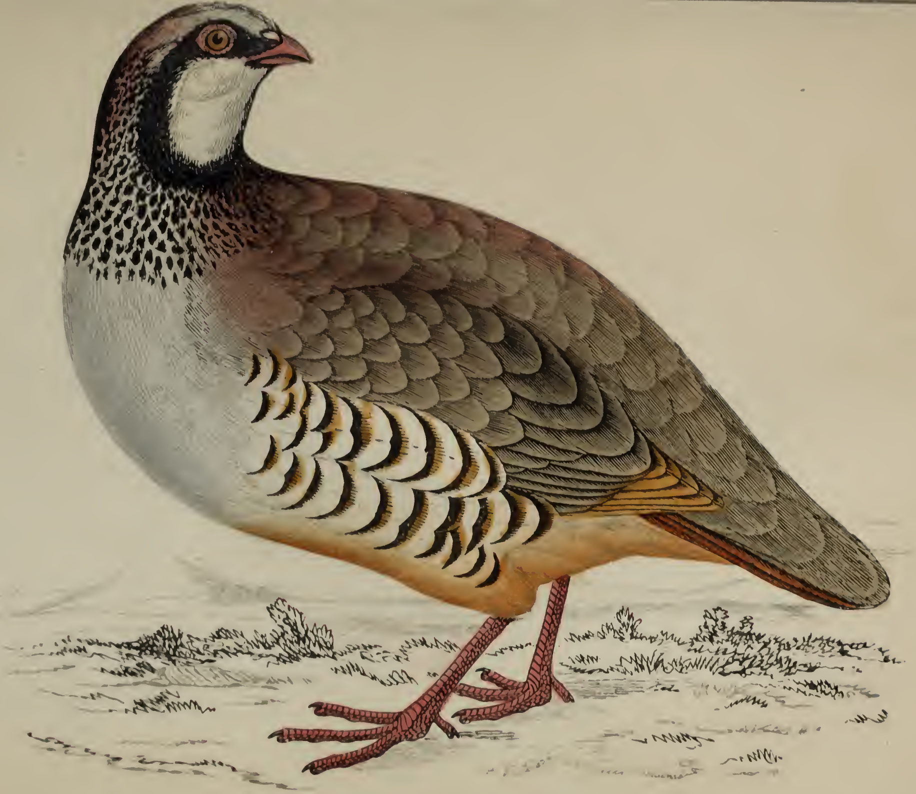
Perdix rufa, MONTAGU. FLEMING.
Tetrao rufus, BEWICK.

Perdix—A Partridge. *Rufa. Rufus*—Red.

THIS handsome species is a native of various parts of the south of Europe, being plentiful in Germany, France, Portugal, Spain, and Italy, and also met with in Austria, Bohemia, and Switzerland, likewise in Guernsey and Jersey, and it is said in Madeira. It also occurs plentifully in the north of Africa, and in Asia—in Japan.

Red-legged Partridges were introduced into this country in the reign of King Charles the Second in the neighbourhood of Windsor, and afterwards more recently by the Duke of Northumberland, and the Earl of Rochford; also by the Marquis of Hertford at Sudbourn, near Orford, in Suffolk, and by Lord Rendlesham, at Rendlesham, in the same neighbourhood. These have increased, and are now abundant upon Dunmingworth Heath, and from Aldborough to Woodbridge, from whence they have spread over the adjoining counties. Some were turned out by the Marquis of Hastings, at Donnington Park, Derbyshire, but a few seasons saw them extinguished. The Rev. T. Fowler, in two instances, has known these birds found upon the beach in an exhausted state, as if after a long flight. They have been met with in Essex, near Colchester. In Yorkshire several are said to have been shot near Doncaster. Some have made their appearance in Roger Wildrake's 'moist county of Lincoln;' others near Royston, in Hertfordshire; and the species has been met with at Upway, near Weymouth, Dorsetshire.

The Hon. Thomas Littleton Powys has written to me of



RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.

the occurrence of but one of these birds in the neighbourhood of Lilford, Northamptonshire, which, as he observes, 'considering its abundance in Norfolk and Suffolk, is rather a curious circumstance.' One was shot near Anglesea Abbey, Cambridgeshire, on the 11th. of September, 1821; and others have been met with in that county. A pair in 1835 on the Chiltern Hills, near Stokenchurch, Oxfordshire, where a covey of six were found on the 21st. of September, 1848, by Mr. Willoughby Beauchamp.

In Orkney several were introduced in late years.

They frequent cultivated grounds, and especially hilly parts where bushes and copsewood abound, but seem to give a preference to heaths, commons, and other waste lands.

They are good, but not nearly so good to eat as the native species. They have been known to breed in confinement. The male birds frequently fight in the spring of the year.

They run very fast, and are not easily put up; and in those parts of the country where they have become naturalized, they have had the effect, from some cause or other, of banishing the indigenous Partridge. They perch at times in trees, and, if convenient, on a hedge, gate, or rail.

Their dietary is composed of seeds, grain, clover, and other vegetables, beetles, flies, and other insects, ants, and their eggs, spiders, caterpillars, and small snails, and they scratch on the ground after the manner of the other birds of this class.

The note is likened to the syllables 'cokileke,' and is often heard in the spring.

The nest is made of grass and a few feathers of the bird itself, and is placed among corn, grass, or clover, or near a bush.

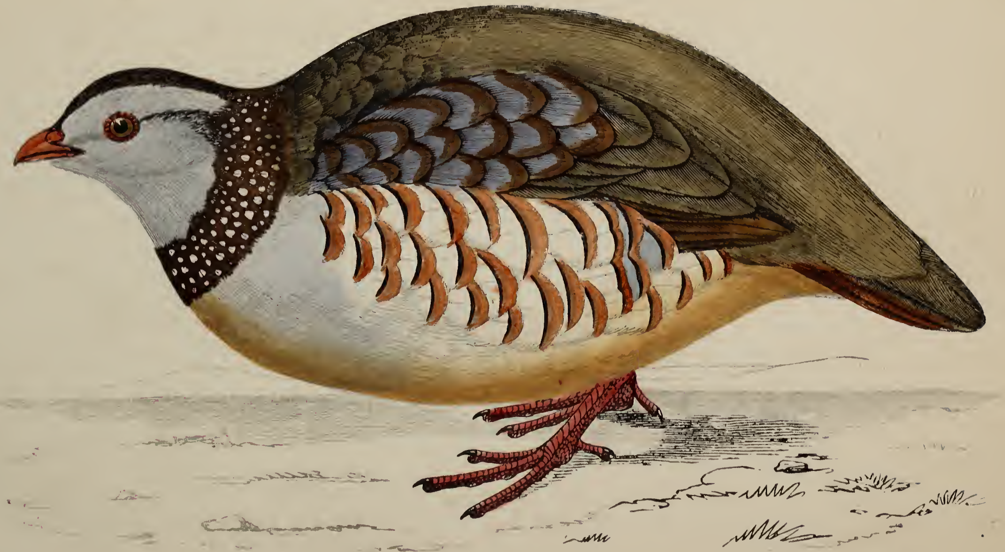
Mr. Jesse says that a clergyman, in the county of Norfolk, found the nest in the thatch of a hayrick, and informed him that such is no unfrequent occurrence. Other similar instances are mentioned.

The eggs are usually from ten to twelve in number: as many as eighteen have been sometimes found. They are of a reddish yellow-white colour, spotted and speckled with reddish brown. The young leave the nest soon after being hatched. The male takes no part in the incubation of the eggs, and leaves the care of the brood to their mother till they are half grown, when he returns to them, and continues with them till the following spring.

Male; length, one foot one and a half to one foot two inches; bill, bright red; a black band runs from its base to the eye and down the neck, widening towards the front, where both sides meet, and from it numerous black spots and streaks descend towards the breast; iris, reddish orange; eyelids, red; over the eye is a bare red space, and a white line runs over it. Forehead, grey; sides of the head, white, tinged with grey; crown, neck on the back, and nape, reddish brown; on the sides, greyish white, tinged with brown and spotted with black, margined with greyish brown, and followed by a broad band of ash-colour; chin, white; throat, white, tinged with grey; breast, light yellowish red; on the sides are broad bands of red, followed by others of grey, white, black, and reddish yellow; below, it is clear rufous; back, reddish brown, tinged with grey.

The wings, very short, extending to the width of one foot nine inches, have the second, third, and fourth quills nearly equal, and the longest, the first nearly as long as the sixth; greater and lesser wing coverts, reddish brown, tinged with grey; the primaries, greyish black, and, except the first, with part of the outer webs yellowish brown; seven of the secondaries have also part of the outer web dull yellow; they too are greyish black, as are the tertiaries. The tail, of sixteen feathers, has the four middle ones reddish brown, tinged with grey, the others brownish red; upper tail coverts, reddish brown, tinged with grey; under tail coverts, light yellowish red. Legs, with a blunt spur, and toes, bright red; on the first are five, on the second sixteen, on the third twenty-two, and on the fourth eighteen narrow plates; claws, dusky brown.

Female; length, one foot one inch; the crescent on the neck is narrower, and pale, and the spots on its lower part much smaller; the legs, light yellowish brown, have no spur.



BARBARY PARTRIDGE.

BARBARY PARTRIDGE.

Perdix petrosa, LATHAM.

Perdix—A Partridge. *Petrosa*—Of the rocks—Rocky.

THE Barbary Partridge, as its name conveys, is found on the north-western and northern coasts of Africa, from Senegal to Morocco, Barbary, and Algeria, where it is said to be very common. It is found also in the islands of the Mediterranean, Majorca, Minorca, Corsica, Malta, Sardinia, and Sicily; in Europe also in Spain, France, Italy, and Greece; and in Asia in the region of the Caucasus.

A specimen of this species, a female, was found dead in a field at Edwardthorpe, near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, in April, 1842. It had every appearance of being a wild bird. About the same period another was shot by a nobleman on the estate of the Marquis of Hertford, at Sudbourn, in Suffolk. It appears that about the year 1770, some eggs had been imported into that part of the country by the then Marquis and Lord Rendlesham. Edwards wrote in 1802 that they were frequently brought over. This one may therefore have been a descendant of some of these, or itself a 'Sallee Rover,' but of the most harmless kind.

These birds go in flocks, frequenting all places that afford them cover, and even come into gardens. They are, however, shy in their habits. They are eaten as food, though not of any superior quality.

They feed on grain, seeds, and insects.

They build in barren places and desert mountains, among low bushes on the ground.

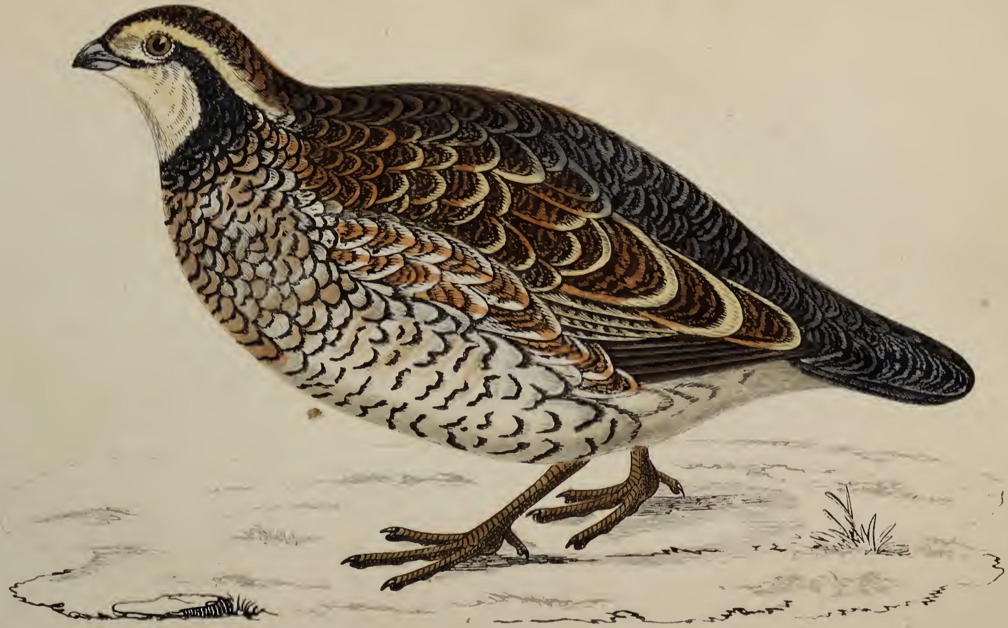
The eggs are as many as fifteen, of a dull yellowish colour, thickly dotted with greenish olive spots.

Mr. Couch says of one of these birds which he had, that it possessed great strength in its legs, especially in leaping without the assistance of its wings, and was able to spring from the floor to the top of a table with little seeming effort.

Male; length, one foot one inch; bill, red, as is a bare space over the eye; iris, hazel; head on the sides, bluish ash-colour, with a narrow black edge above; crown, neck on the back, and nape, rich chesnut brown, coming round in front to the bottom of the neck, handsomely variegated with small triangular-shaped white spots. Chin and throat, bluish ash-colour above and below the collar; breast, brownish grey, with a tinge of reddish buff, barred on the sides with white, black, and bright chesnut; on the lower part yellowish brown, and then reddish buff. Back, greyish brown.

Greater and lesser wing coverts, a mixture of brown and grey, broadly edged with chesnut. Primaries, brownish black on the inner webs, the outer web of the fourth greyish brown, of the others light brown on their inner half, pencilled with dusky transverse markings; tertiaries, a mixture of brown and grey. The tail, rich chesnut brown, has the middle feathers pencilled with dusky transverse markings; under tail coverts, brownish grey, with a tinge of reddish buff. The legs,—which have blunt spurs—toes, and claws, red.

The female is smaller, the colour not so bright, and she is without the spurs.



VIRGINIAN PARTRIDGE.

VIRGINIAN PARTRIDGE.

Perdix Virginiana, LATHAM. JENYNS.

Perdix—A Partridge. *Virginiana*—Of Virginia.

THE species before us has been introduced into this country from America, where it is indigenous in both continents. Montagu mentions that several had been turned out in different parts of the British Empire, and he speaks of one shot near Mansfield, in Nottinghamshire. In Norfolk, some were turned out by Mr. Coke, (Lord Leicester,) near Holkham, and some of their descendants are believed still to exist; a nest with several eggs was found at Barton, in that county. Several have been killed in the county of Surrey; others were introduced at Teddesly, in Staffordshire, by Edward John Littleton, Esq., of that estate; one was shot at Rotherfield, near Tunbridge Wells, Kent, a female, about the first of January, 1850; another, a male about the same time and place; and one near Chelsham Court, Godstone, Surrey, in the middle of October, 1845: it was supposed to be one of a number procured from America, which had been turned out near Windsor by His Royal Highness Prince Albert.

In Ireland, General Gabbit liberated many on his estates, but it is said that in two years the breed was lost.

In their native country they are migratory.

The Virginian Partridge can be kept in confinement, and has been known to breed in that state. They are taken in large numbers for the table, being very much esteemed, and are captured in various ways. They frequent the neighbourhood of woods, but rarely the woods or forests themselves, and conceal themselves among bushes, brushwood, and herbage, from which they emerge to feed in the open fields; they perch at times in low trees. In severe weather they come close to barns in search of any 'waifs or strays' in the shape of food, mix with the poultry, and seem almost half-domesticated. They suffer severely in times of deep snow and lengthened winters. About the beginning of September they collect in flocks of from four or five to thirty. They usually roost at night on some high ground in the middle of a field, and they are said to lie in a circle with their heads outwards; in trees also sometimes.

They fly with a whirring sound, straight, steadily, and quick.

Their food is made up of Indian corn, buckwheat, and other grain, seeds, berries, and insects.

The call, says Wilson, consists of two notes loud and clear, with sometimes an introductory one, and resembles the words 'Bob White;' another account describes it as two short low whistles, followed by one long, loud, and shrill.

Nidification begins early in May.

The nest, placed under or in some thick tuft of grass that shelters and conceals it, is described as well covered with a hood, an opening being left on one side for entrance, and is composed of leaves and fine dry grass, both birds assisting in its fabrication.

The eggs, from ten or twelve to fifteen or even twenty-four in number, this latter quantity the joint produce in all probability of two birds laying in the same nest, are pure white, without any spots, and broad at one end, and pointed at the other.

The hen bird performs the task of incubation for four weeks, and the whole family keep together till the following spring. The young leave the nest at once on being hatched, and are conducted forth by the female in search of food, and from time to time are sheltered under her wings, collected together by a twittering cry. Should danger appear to threaten, she displays extreme anxiety, boldly attacking an intruder, or using every artifice and stratagem to draw him away, feigning lameness, 'throwing herself in the path, fluttering along, and beating the ground with her wings, as if sorely wounded, uttering at the same time certain peculiar notes of alarm, well understood by the young, which dive separately among the grass, and secrete themselves till the danger is over; and the parent, having decoyed the pursuer to a safe distance, returns, by a circuitous route, to collect and lead them off.' She shews the greatest assiduity and the most sedulous and unremitting attention in their further care. Wilson mentions a curious anecdote of some young ones which had been hatched under a hen, and which, 'when abandoned by her, associated with the cows, which they regularly followed to the fields, returned with them when they came home in the evening, stood by them while they were milked, and again accompanied them to the pasture. These remained during the winter, lodging in the stable, but as soon as spring came they disappeared.'

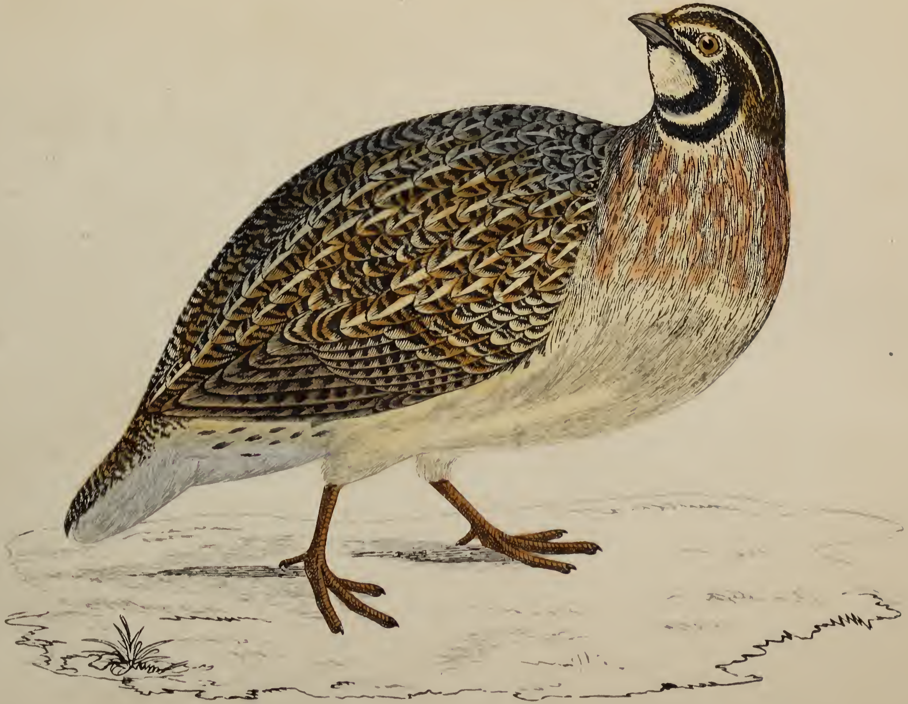
Of a cock bird, one of a pair kept in confinement, and which reared a brood, a correspondent of the 'Magazine of Natural History' wrote, 'Previously to and during the time the hen was sitting, the cock serenaded her with his harsh and singular notes, some of them very similar to the mewing of a cat. He had also a peculiarity of constantly running round in a circle, till the ground where he performed his evolutions was worn as bare as a road, and the turf trodden down. Nothing could be more cordial and harmonious than this happy family. When the shades of evening approached, they crowded together in a circle on the ground, and prepared for the slumbers of the night by placing their tails all together, with their pretty mottled chins facing to the front in a watchful round-robin. When food was thrown in for them, the male bird would peck at the grain, but not eat any himself until he had called his family around him first to partake of the food, which he did with many soft blandishments, and with much strutting and spreading of the wings and tail.'

Male: length, a little over nine inches to nine and a half; bill, according to Meyer, bluish horn-colour, or black, as described by Wilson and Macgillivray, dusky black according to Yarrell; from the base of the upper mandible begins a black band, which continues above the eye, and forms a broad collar round the throat; over the eye and down the neck is a white streak underneath the black one. Iris, dusky black; under the eye is a black band running down the neck on each side and meeting in front; forehead, white; crown, rich red brown, edged on each side with black, of which colour are the centres of the feathers, and they are occasionally elevated in a crest-like manner. Neck on the sides and nape, also yellowish red brown, pencilled or spotted with white and black; most of the feathers edged with bluish ash-colour and pale yellow. Chin and throat, white, bounded by the band of black. Breast, on the upper part, pale reddish brown; the feathers of the lower part pale yellowish or greyish white, edged with arrow-heads of black, and those on the sides elegantly marked on their centres with rich chesnut brown, bordered with black lines and white margins. Back above, yellowish red brown, slightly pencilled all over with black; most of the feathers edged with bluish ash-colour and pale yellow.

The wings, of twenty-three quills, have the first and eighth feathers of the same length, the second equal to the sixth, the fourth the longest in the wing, the fifth nearly equal to it, the third about equal to the seventh; lesser wing coverts, yellowish red brown, pencilled with black. Primaries, greyish brown; secondaries and tertiaries, dusky, or greyish brown, the inner ones of the former variegated with the black markings; the latter edged with yellowish white. The tail, of twelve feathers, short and much rounded, is greyish blue or ash-colour, sprinkled with reddish brown, waved towards the end with yellowish red; upper tail coverts, olive brown and yellowish brown, pencilled with black; under tail coverts, light yellowish red, with dusky streaks on the centres of the feathers and whitish tips. Legs and toes, light ash-colour; claws, dusky.

Female; length, nine inches; the band over the eyes and the head on the sides, light yellowish brown; crown, paler than in the male; neck in front, light red on the lower part; on the back and the nape, paler than in the male. Throat, light yellowish brown, margined with black, brown, and yellowish red spots; breast, light red; back, paler than in the male. The tail, more undulated with red and greyish white.

The young at first have the bill brownish yellow; iris, light hazel; the head on the sides, dusky; the upper parts light yellowish brown, with patches of grey.



QUAIL.

QUAIL.

COMMON QUAIL.

Perdix coturnix,	LATHAM. JENYNS.
Tetrao coturnix,	LINNÆUS.

Perdix—A Partridge. *Coturnix*—A Quail.

THE Quail is very abundant on the continent of Europe, in Italy and France, and in Sicily, and the Greek Islands. They go as far north in summer as Lapland, and the more temperate parts of Siberia and Russia; and are also found in Africa, even at the Cape of Good Hope; and in many parts of Asia, in China, India, Malacca, and Japan.

In England they are much less common than they were fifty years ago, while the contrary is the case in Ireland, but in some seasons they are more plentiful than in others.

In Yorkshire they seem to have been formerly more abundant than they are now. They are occasionally met with about Sheffield, and used to breed in the vicinity of Halifax, likewise near York, also near Leeds, at Seacroft, Killingbeck, and Churwell, and near Huddersfield, Burlington, and other places. In Norfolk they are not uncommon near Yarmouth, but in most parts are limited in numbers. They were formerly far more numerous there.

N. Rowe, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, has informed me of their breeding near Crediton, Devonshire, in a corn-field on Staddon Heights, where the eggs were taken on the 1st. of August, 1850; and also on the moors about the Harbridge Flats on the borders of Surrey and Berkshire. In Cornwall they seem to be rather rare; one was taken on board a pilot-boat about twenty miles at sea, May 10th., 1850; and two were shot in September in the same year.

The Quail occurs near Lilford, Northamptonshire, as the Hon. T. L. Powys has informed me, and also near Aldwinkle and Titchmarsh; likewise in some parts of Berkshire they are common, while in others they are hardly ever seen, as William Hewet, Esq. has written me word. In Lincolnshire the Rev. R. P. Alington says they appear singly in autumn; in the year 1851 more were seen than usual; formerly they used to occur in bevies in the parish of Stenigot, near Horncastle. One was met with in June, 1840, within a hundred yards of the town of Melbourne, Derbyshire.

Captain Turton, of the Third Dragoon Guards, has written me word that the Quail is the Partridge of Ireland, and that if the country gentlemen would go to the expense of preserving them, as they do in England, they might have as many as there are Partridges in our best preserves.

In Scotland it occurs but seldom; in Sutherlandshire it appears occasionally near Dunrobin, and also has been met with in Aberdeenshire, in the parish of Towie, and in Morayshire. In Orkney one was shot in Sanday, by Mr. Strang, in May, 1833.

Quails migrate north and south in spring and autumn in countless thousands, and vast numbers are taken by bird-catchers. As many as one hundred thousand are said to have been taken in one day in the kingdom of Naples. Three thousand dozen are reported to have been purchased in one year by the London dealers alone. They migrate in flocks, and the males are said to precede the females. They are believed to travel at night. They arrive here the end of April, or beginning of May, and depart early again in September. Not being strong on the wing, yet obliged to cross the sea to seek a warmer climate in winter, thousands are picked up by the shores on their arrival in an exhausted state; many are drowned in the passage, and some are frequently captured on board of vessels met with 'in transitu.' Not a few, however, seem to remain throughout the winter. —One was obtained in this parish, Nafferton, Yorkshire, in December, 1851; one at Halliford, in Middlesex, the 18th. of September, 1841. One was shot near Worcester, in January, 1850; another, a male, the same month at Parson Drove, near Wisbeach, in the Isle of Ely, Cambridgeshire, on the 16th.;

another on the 30th., at March; and another on the 31st., captured near Guyhirn.

In Bedfordshire, one in February, 1833; in Shropshire, one at Shiffnal, on the 20th. of January, 1846. In Norfolk, at Reedham on the 11th.; at Bawburgh on the 14th.; near Loddon, a pair, male and female, on the 19th.; one near Norwich, on the 23rd. of December, 1846; and another in the following month, January, 1847. On the 26th. of August, 1848, a hen bird and a young one were captured at Drayton. Two were killed at Bottisham, Cambridgeshire, on the 11th. of November, 1825; and one at Topham, in the end of January. One at Normanby-by-Spital, Lincolnshire, by the Rev. Edward Cooper, B.A., on the 1st. of February, 1853. Two in Oxfordshire, followed by two others on the 10th. of November, 1846, and the 9th. of December, 1848. In December, in Oxfordshire, near Spoden; and on the 12th. of February, 1840, at East Ilsley, in Berkshire, and they have also been seen in that county in the winter not far from Wallingford, William Hewet, Esq. tells me. The Rev. Frederic Fane writes me word of others killed in December and January, in Hampshire and Dorsetshire; another also in that county at Brickland, near Weymouth, the last week in January, 1853.

The males have desperate encounters with each other in the spring. These birds are very delicate eating, and the demand in consequence keeps pace with the large supply. They are easily kept in confinement, and as easily fattened. They are captured in nets and traps, into which latter they are decoyed by imitating their note, and are also shot in numbers.

They run with great rapidity, and can take long flights, as proved by their migration, but while here they are difficult to put up a second time after they have been once flushed. They fly quick, straight, and low, rising suddenly and uttering a scream.

They feed on grain, seeds, green leaves, and insects.

Their voice is a shrill whistling note, a 'whit, whit,' usually repeated three times in succession, and considered on the continent as a sort of song. It is often and incessantly repeated nearly the whole of the day in the spring season, but especially towards the evening. When fighting with one another they utter a sort of croak. Bechstein likens the note of the male to 'verra, verra,' followed by the word 'pievervie;' that of the female by 'verra, verra, pupu, pupu,' and when alarmed or enraged, their cry, he says, resembles the word 'guillah.'

For a nest the female scrapes out a small hollow in the ground, into which she collects a few bits of dry grass, straw, clover, and such like. She alone sits, and very closely, on the eggs, but the male assists her in the care of the young.

The eggs are yellowish white, orange-coloured white, or greenish, blotted or speckled with brown. They vary much in number, from six to fourteen, or even, it is said, twenty, though generally ten. Incubation lasts about three weeks. The young follow the dam as soon as they are hatched.

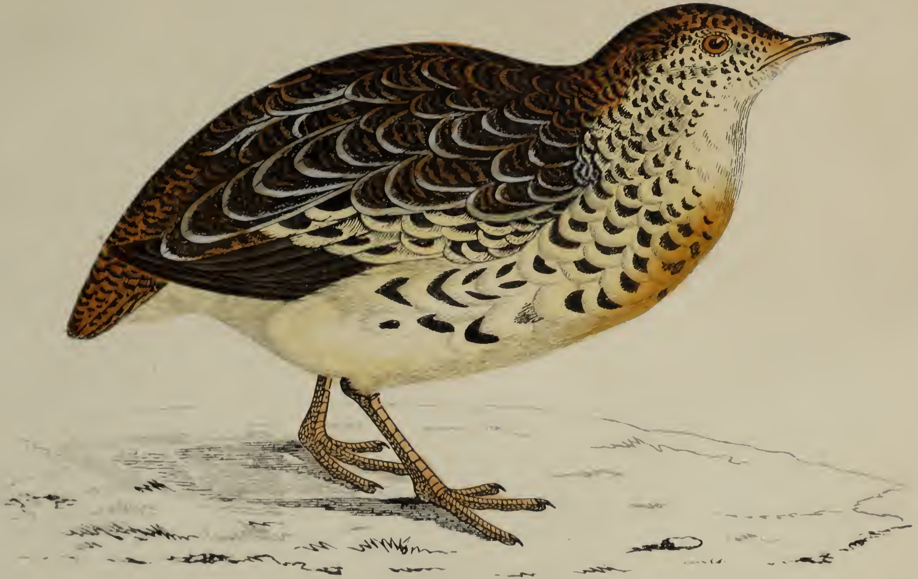
Male; length, eight inches; bill, greyish brown above, greenish blue beneath, the tip yellowish: iris, hazel; over it, and extending down the side of the neck, is a band of yellowish white, formed by marks on the centres of the feathers. The crown, with a narrow band of yellowish white, formed by marks on the centre of each feather, and neck on the back, black, the feathers edged with brown; nape, a mixture of brownish black, light red, and yellowish grey; chin and throat, pale chesnut brown; on the latter are two crescents of brownish black, with a black patch at the base, its sides light yellowish brown or reddish, spotted with black and yellowish white; breast, above, light yellowish brown or reddish, with straw-coloured shaft lines; on the middle and lower part pale yellowish white; and on the sides light brownish red, each feather with a central band of white, edged with brownish black; the back is variegated with brownish black, light red, and yellowish grey, with four longitudinal bands of yellowish white pointed streaks.

The wings, of twenty feathers, have the first three of nearly equal length, but the first a little longer than the third, the second the longest; they expand to one foot two inches in width; greater and lesser wing coverts, pale rufous brown, streaked with brown and yellowish grey; primaries, dusky brown, banded on the outer webs with pale red, the first one with its outer edge white. The tail, of fourteen feathers, dark brown, barred with whitish; upper tail coverts, rufous brown; under tail coverts, pale yellowish white. Legs, toes, and claws, greyish yellow.

The female is paler in general colour; the neck is without the crescents and the black patch: a dusky streak passes down from behind the eyes; chin and throat, pale yellowish white; the breast is marked with small dark spots on each side of the straw-coloured shafts; greater and lesser wing coverts, crossed with yellowish white bars; legs and toes, greyish yellow.

The young of the year resemble the female; the males do not acquire the black patch till the second year.

Varieties have occurred of a white and of a yellowish white colour, some spotted with white, and others dusky all over.



ANDALUSIAN QUAIL.

nape, dark yellowish brown, with numerous bars of chesnut, black, and buff white; chin, dull yellowish white; throat and breast on the upper part, pale chesnut, the latter on the sides yellowish white, the feathers tipped with black, and with a crescent-shaped mark of rich orange buff, deepest in front; on the lower part buff white and pure white; back, yellowish dusky brown, finely pencilled transversely with zigzag markings of reddish ash-colour, and lines of brown and chesnut, each feather being finely margined with white. Greater and lesser wing coverts, yellowish brown, with large spots of a paler shade, with a darker spot in the centre of each; primaries, dusky greyish brown, with a light-coloured line along the edge of the outer web. Tail, greyish brown; upper tail coverts, yellowish lusky brown; under tail coverts, white. Legs and toes, pale yellowish brown.

END OF VOL. IV.

B. FAWCETT, ENGRAVER AND PRINTER, DRIFFIELD.